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INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS RESEARCH
AMERICAN VILLAGE STUDIES
EDMUND DES. BRUNNER, Director

UNITED CHURCHES

The Institute of Social and Religious Research, which is responsible for this publication, was organized in January, 1921, as the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys. It conducts and publishes studies and surveys and promotes conferences for their consideration. The Institute's aim is to combine the scientific method with the religious motive. It coöperates with other social and religious agencies, but is itself an independent organization.

The directorate of the Institute is composed of: John R. Mott, Chairman; Trevor Arnett, Treasurer; Kenyon L. Butterfield, Recording Secretary; James L. Barton, W. H. P. Faunce and Paul Monroe. Galen M. Fisher is Executive Secretary. The offices are at 370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

UNITED CHURCHES

BY

ELIZABETH R. HOOKER

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UNITED CHURCHES
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FOREWORD

The material upon which this volume is based was gathered as part of the comprehensive study of American agricultural villages conducted by the Institute of Social and Religious Research between January, 1922, and December, 1925.

From time to time in the past few years tentative approaches have been made to the Institute to undertake a study of local church union. Such a study, it was suggested, should investigate the relation of church union to the condition that has been known, somewhat vaguely, as "overchurching," and should take account of such questions as the various kinds of union attempted, the successes and failures registered and the methods that have actually been employed in uniting churches.

At an early stage in the field work of the study of American agricultural villages it became apparent that a considerable amount of data bearing upon local church union could be gathered conjointly with the material for the larger study. It was found, for example, that villages had more churches per unit of population than any other type of community, and that the problems arising from this condition were often a matter of grave concern to village inhabitants. In some cases definite attempts to solve the problem had been made by means of the united church, and in other cases, even though no such concrete attempt had been made, a considerable sentiment in favor of church union of some sort was discovered.

It was decided, therefore, to undertake, as a section of the larger study, an investigation of experiments in church union as found in American agricultural villages. Obviously the sample of villages chosen for the rest of the study was too small to furnish a sufficient number of cases of church

union on which to base conclusions. Additional cases of united churches of one kind or another located in rural communities were therefore selected for investigation in this section of the study. Use was also made of material already in the files of the Institute and of mail questionnaires.

This section of the American Village Study was largely in the hands of Miss Elizabeth R. Hooker, who planned the investigation, surveyed three-fourths of the churches visited, and is the author of this report.

EDMUND DES. BRUNNER.

INTRODUCTION

The Movement Toward Local Church Union

Churches combining elements of more than one denominational origin, which were almost unknown a generation ago, have been increasing in number rapidly, especially since 1910, throughout the northern and western parts of the United States. Several types of union have appeared, those generally recognized being the federated church, the undenominational church, and the denominational church uniting diverse elements; and the examples of each type show considerable variety.

These unions, many of which have been opposed by denominational leaders, have to a large extent been brought about through local initiative. Popular interest in the movement is indicated by the frequency of references in periodicals, secular as well as religious—publications as various as dignified monthlies, farm journals, woman's magazines, and even daily papers—to "the evils of church competition," and to specific experiments in union. This interest has naturally been stimulated by the union of denominational bodies in Canada. In many little villages scattered all the way from New England to Southern California, the storekeeper, the garage man, the doctor and the farmer are talking about how they may make their two or three or four churches into one.

Concern about the spread of the movement is plain in certain annual reports of denominational officials who sometimes express hope in its possibilities for good, but oftener betray alarm as to what appear to them to be the dangers of at least two of the usual types of union. Concerning problems of united churches, the Presbyterian General Assembly and the Methodist Episcopal General Conference have

several times taken formal action. Partly in consequence of this movement, interdenominational agencies have been established in many states.

Why the Movement Should Be Studied

The numerous references, in and out of print, to united churches of all kinds, exhibit phenomenal vagueness and contrariety. For example, the hard-worked expression, "community church," is employed in at least six different senses. The undenominational type of union is believed by some to constitute the one hope for religion in the future, by others to be subject to such perils that it almost invariably fails within a few years; and fully as much divergence of opinion prevails regarding the denominational united church and regarding the federated church.

A few books have been published on the subject, but the devoted authors of these would be the first to say that they had acted merely as scouts who had brought back word of the extent of the field to be surveyed. Phenomena so multiform and so widespread cannot be investigated adequately without an expenditure of money prohibitive to an individual; and what has so far been published has necessarily been based upon knowledge of a small number of examples.

Authoritative information, the lack of which is particularly to be regretted, would be of use to many persons: to leaders in communities in which the question of union is being considered; to the officers of united churches already organized, who face problems upon which they need light from the combined experience of older cases of union; to ministers serving united churches; to theological students who may serve united churches; to many hundreds of conscientious and greatly puzzled denominational superintendents whose duties oblige them to give advice and to take responsible action concerning the formation of united churches; and to those denominational leaders who determine policies regarding home-mission aid, ministerial supply, and like matters affecting the welfare of united churches, and even their existence. In each of the groups

indicated there are many individuals to whom it is of vital importance to obtain knowledge quickly, since otherwise they must make important decisions in ignorance of the results of experience.

That many of these persons are aware of their need of enlightenment and are eager to obtain it, is indicated by their appeals for information. It is the unanimous testimony of the ministers of prominent united churches, and even of men who may have delivered a single address or published a single article on the subject, as well as of editors of magazines known to be sympathetic to the movement, that inquiries are constantly sent to them from many parts of the country.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the united churches of several different types that had arisen as substitutes for the competing denominational churches found in so many American villages.

It was intended to provide in some small degree, as the American Village Study proper provided on a much larger scale, facts that might serve as data for sociologists and also inform the practice of religious leaders.

Other objectives of the study are these:

To provide church and community leaders with information as to how different communities have united their religious forces.

To record for the officers of united churches the experience of many unions in meeting their common problems.

To help in many ways not only the ministers of united churches, but theological students looking forward to such fields.

To aid denominational superintendents by throwing light on their problems of oversight in situations involving actual or prospective union.

To furnish denominational leaders and officials of interdenominational agencies information bearing on problems concerning comity relations, home-mission aid, ministerial supply, and the like, as these are related to united churches.

The Field

The field is the United States exclusive of the South. The South was omitted because it had very few united churches. The states covered number thirty and are situated in New England, in the Middle Atlantic States, in the Middle West, in the region of the Rocky Mountains, and on the Pacific Coast. The line between North and South, drawn somewhat arbitrarily—in part for convenience in travel—follows Mason and Dixon's line and the Ohio River, leaves out Missouri except for a single case surveyed, passes north of Oklahoma, and includes Southern California.

Within these limits attention has been paid only to cases of union in what in the surveys of the Institute of Social and Religious Research is denominated "town and country" area; that is, in communities where the population of the center is less than 5,000. The situation of united churches in suburbs and cities is so peculiar that to have included them would have clouded the issues. On the other hand, the problems of united churches in small places are essentially the same, whatever the population of the center. Therefore, the united churches listed and considered statistically in this study include, not only those in villages, which form the majority, but those in hamlets, a few in towns and a few in the open country.

How the Study Was Made

List of Cases of Union

The first step in the investigation was to prepare a list of cases of union. Traces of possible cases of union were obtained from the statistics of certain denominations, the most help of this kind being derived from the *Congregational Year-Book*. The secretaries of two state federations of churches provided lists of the unions in the states in question, and a more general list was furnished by a leader in the community-church movement. Letters were sent to about 500 denominational superintendents, asking them to

list for the study the cases of union of the different types situated within the limits of their fields. To doubtful churches, form letters of inquiry were addressed. The evidence obtained from all these sources was embodied in a card index that served as a tentative list, to be checked later.

MAIL SCHEDULES

To the minister of each of the churches listed—or failing a minister, to some other informant—there was mailed a printed schedule accompanied by a covering letter. This schedule consisted of four pages, three of which applied to all types of union, while the fourth, of which there were three variants, concerned the features peculiar to one of the types. The questions did not touch those points reported in denominational statistics, but concerned such matters as environment, factors effecting union, minister, organization, property, and relations with denominational agencies. Some responses showed that the supposed cases of union had been listed in error; many schedules were not returned, even after follow-up postal cards had been despatched; and others were returned so nearly blank as to be of little use. But there were received 324 schedules furnishing useful information, a considerable number being accompanied with explanatory letters; and many, both of the schedules and of the letters, had been prepared with a fullness, a care for accuracy, and an insight into the local situation, that rendered them, taken all together, a priceless part of the survey material.

At later stages of the investigation, a one-page schedule was addressed to ministers or other leaders of undenominational churches, to secure with respect to churches of this type information comparable to that provided by denominational statistics; and again, a one-page schedule was sent out to church leaders in places where union had been attempted and abandoned. A fair proportion of schedules of both these kinds was returned with useful information.

CORRESPONDENCE

In speaking of the list of united churches, reference was made to letters to denominational superintendents. These letters included also inquiries about dates of union, failures, churches deserving survey, and the like. The response of these busy men was generous both as regards the number of replies—which corresponded to over 40 per cent. of the number of inquiries, and in the Colonial area, to over 60 per cent.—and in respect to the fullness of the information supplied. Some superintendents also responded to later inquiries, and even volunteered information. The representatives of several state interdenominational agencies have also been most helpful through their letters, as have many others.

STATISTICAL CARDS

Since it was desired that the study should make the fullest possible use of the data afforded in denominational statistics, large cards were prepared, with printed column-headings. Upon these cards were entered data for every united church for which the facts were available, and so far as possible for each unit of every federated church. In cases in which union resulted from the combination of existing churches, an attempt was made to obtain statistics for the combining units for the year before union. As more of these churches had been during that year parts of circuits, and as some of them had been inactive, this information was obtainable for a much smaller number; but it was entered on the cards for 167 federated churches. For two groups of federated churches, totalling thirty-eight cases, similar data were obtained for four different years.

STATISTICAL TABLES

The data entered upon these cards, and other data provided by schedules, were used as material for many statistical tables.

MAPS

For each of the thirty states for which churches were listed, a map was prepared, upon which was indicated the location of every united church, those of each type being distinguished by special signal marks. These maps were useful in studying environmental conditions affecting union. The state maps were combined in a map of the entire field. Another inclusive map was prepared to show the location of the churches surveyed. Both these inclusive maps are reproduced in this book.

FIELD SURVEYS

Field surveys of eighty-three united churches were also utilized for the study, all these surveys having been made by investigators of the Institute of Social and Religious Research. The churches to be surveyed were chosen to represent all types of union, with a few examples of combinations approaching union and several cases of abandoned experiments; and also to cover typical conditions under which united churches develop; to cover all areas of the field chosen; and to represent different stages of union and different degrees of amalgamation. The cases surveyed included more examples of strength than of weakness, and some notable examples of success.

INTERVIEWS

A part of the program of travel almost as important as the surveys of united churches, consisted of interviews with denominational and interdenominational leaders, and with others well informed as to the movement, such as state Sunday-school secretaries and rural sociologists. The denominational and interdenominational superintendents in charge of districts or of states visited gave freely of their time and help. Through their assistance it was possible to check up the list of united churches, and to procure informa-

tion about more than 600 specific cases of union, so that about a large proportion of the denominational and the federated unions more is known than the mere existence. Those interviewed also explained interdenominational relations in their fields, and described the workings of interdenominational agencies where any existed. Many expressed freely their views of the different types of union. These expressions of opinion were felt to be especially valuable, because they had been formed through personal contacts with several—sometimes with many—united churches; through personal contacts, moreover, in which responsibility had sharpened selected intelligence. The judgments of these superintendents were the more suggestive in that they were often contradictory. Consultation with authorities on rural conditions threw additional light on the situation. Altogether, more than 145 interviews were obtained independently of the surveys.

Outline of the Book

The first part of the book will enumerate factors tending to undermine the barriers between rural churches of different denominations and will give a brief history of the development of the different types of united churches.

Part II will characterize each of four types of united churches, and will present comparisons of united churches and the average church, and comparisons of different types of united churches.

Part III will show how united churches, without regard to type, met their various puzzling problems.

Part IV will describe endeavors on the part of denominations and state interdenominational agencies to coördinate united churches and the existing religious order. It will also summarize the findings of the study.

Why Names Are Not Used

NAMES OF PLACES

Since the materials utilized for the book included eighty-three surveys, 175 constitutions, 428 schedules of various kinds, and notes on interviews with denominational superintendents concerning more than 600 cases of union, it would have been easy to enliven the discussion with anecdotes about particular united churches. This was not done, for the following reasons. In the first place, the purpose here is to explain general tendencies. Most of the statements made are true of many instances. When a specific case is cited, this is used as being representative of many others. To give the geographical location would center attention on the example rather than on the tendency. Again, the investigators were told many things in confidence; and to draw the line between what might and what might not be repeated would often be extremely difficult. Finally, rapid changes are taking place. What was true of a given church in 1924, might not be true of it in 1926. Yet it would continue to be true of many unnamed churches, and might have become true of many others since the period of observation.

NAMES OF PERSONS

Both for matters of fact and for explanations, the survey is indebted, as has been said, to the testimony of hundreds of persons, including church officers, ministers, denominational superintendents, and many others. Valuable ideas were often imparted in conversation, which sometimes grew semi-confidential. To quote such dicta, ascribing each to its source, would necessitate submitting versions to many busy men. Moreover, in the course of months of travel, the same opinions were heard from a number of different authorities. Further, it may be said that to ascribe to particular ministers or denominational superintendents the practices with respect to united churches which they may have originated, would be

open to the same objections that were adduced to explain why no use is made of the names of places.

The book includes only a very few tables and these are printed in an appendix. This does not mean that the statements of the book, simple as they purposely are, are not based upon statistical calculations. The contrary is the fact. A goodly pile of tables have been prepared, and are on file at the headquarters of the Institute of Social and Religious Research. To make possible some of the simplest statements has required tabulation and calculation requiring hours, days, or even weeks. If it is here stated that a certain condition prevails in four out of five cases, the statement is not based upon guess-work; the cases have been counted, and the condition described has been found to prevail for approximately 80 per cent.

Acknowledgments

It must already be plain that this study has been favored with the assistance of many people. The different individuals who have responded to the various inquiries by mail alone, number well over 1,000. The number of persons interviewed it would be impossible to reckon. To all these the study is indebted for information that could be secured only from witnesses, and also for the stimulus derived from their frequent expressions of need for information.

A sense of gratitude is therefore expressed for the patience and courageous frankness of ministers and other church workers; for the generous gifts of time and information by denominational superintendents, interdenominational secretaries, and other experts interviewed; and for the valuable replies to questions, and for the interpretation of local conditions, by which many correspondents have enlarged the body of information upon which the conclusions of the study are based.

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PART I

DEVELOPMENT

PART I: DEVELOPMENT

Chapter I

DEVELOPMENT OF UNITED CHURCHES

To understand the union of churches in small communities it is necessary to take into consideration certain changes that have been operating in American life for the past thirty or forty years. These changes have been of two kinds: on the one hand changes in environment, resulting in economic pressure that has forced churches to unite or perish; and on the other hand the development through many influences of a new attitude toward neighbors of other denominations.

Many communities that in 1890 supported several churches found the task increasingly difficult during the next thirty years. The new situation was brought about by one or more of the following changes in environment:

Decline in number of inhabitants.

Shifts in population, whereby Protestants were replaced by Catholics, or an element of one denomination was replaced by families of some other denomination or by families without any religious adherence.

Loss by death, or by removal, of individual supporters of particular churches, not compensated for by the acquisition of new adherents.

Decline of economic prosperity, either agricultural or industrial or both.

Lack of increase in incomes in proportion to the general rise in the cost of living.

The increased cost of maintaining churches.

These changes, operating singly or in combination, exerted an economic pressure that forced many churches to live together if they would not die apart.

During the same period there came about a modification

of the attitude of country people toward sectarian divisions. It was induced by:

New environmental influences resulting from the improvement of roads, the use of automobiles, the consolidation of schools, and the introduction of rural delivery, of newspapers, of the telephone and of the radio.

The habit of united action through farmers' organizations, business men's clubs, parent-teacher associations, and the like.

The development of the community ideal.

The net result of these and of similar changes was a decrease in sectarian spirit.

Rise of United Churches

The "union church" is not a new thing. Long ago there arose many instances in New England and some in the Middle West. Most of these union churches either died, or allied themselves with some denomination. In the list of town and country united churches prepared in 1924, there were but three undenominational churches that had been organized before 1890, and one of these had recently been revived after a long period of inactivity.

Several forms of association not constituting organic union long exercised a gradually permeating influence. Joint use of a union church building by two or more denominational groups, which might or might not be organized churches, general during the days of settlement, continued to be a common practice in new communities and in districts sparsely settled. To an increasing extent individuals of one denomination shared in the worship, in the support and in the activities of a church of a different denomination. This became pretty generally a temporary expedient when one of two or more churches in a community was without a pastor. It was adopted as a regular practice by the survivors of many inactive churches. It also occurred frequently where newcomers entered communities having no church of their own denomination, especially communities with but one church and that a live and tolerant one. The

yoking under one minister of two weak churches of different denominations within a few miles of each other became more frequent, permanent formal arrangements being not uncommon. Union services, too, were held in many communities, either regularly or on special occasions, sometimes over a long period of years. In 1919 and 1920, the Interchurch World Movement induced the leaders of all the churches in many places to face together the local religious needs. All these contacts promoted mutual understanding and the spirit of fellowship.

The movement toward the organic union of churches did not begin till an advanced stage of the drift of open-country population toward the villages and cities, which gathered momentum between the Census periods of 1870 and 1890.

The earliest federated church, so far as has been discovered, was formed in 1887 in a declining community in Massachusetts in which two churches no longer financially able to exist separately tried the experiment of forming a partnership for all local activities. Though the decline of the community continued, this earliest federated church still lived in 1924.

That the rural church was in a serious condition began to be recognized by denominational leaders as early as 1890. In that year a meeting was held in Maine that led to the organization in the following year of the Interdenominational Commission of that state, the pioneer agency of this kind. It was influential in molding public opinion not only in its home field, but in other states of New England. Within a few years, similar organizations were formed in Rhode Island, in Vermont, and in Massachusetts. These bodies, through coöperation among denominational officials, exerted influence against the organization of new competing churches; and, especially in Vermont and Massachusetts, helped toward the union of already existing churches. The earliest existing federated church in Vermont, organized in 1899, was said in 1924, by local leaders still living, to have been suggested by denominational officials. Another federated church organized two years later, owes its origin to the fact that a doctor came home from a denominational con-

ference full of new ideas received from an address on "Lessons from the Trusts for the Churches." He stirred up local sentiment for federation; and he and other local leaders made their own constitution for a federated church. This case illustrates an interaction of local and official leadership that was a striking phase in the development of the movement in New England, although the local leadership was the decisive factor.

The number of united churches increased very slowly, one by one. Only forty-four that survived in 1924 had been formed by the beginning of 1912. Of these, fourteen were federated churches; fourteen, including the three dating from the earlier period, were undenominational churches; and sixteen were united churches of the denominational type. All but three of the federated churches and more than half the undenominational churches were in New England, where the effects of a decline in both population and prosperity were keenly felt. Of the denominational united churches, on the other hand, only three were in New England, the other thirteen being in the Middle West and on the Pacific coast.

About 1912, federated churches began to be formed in many states; and in the following years the number formed increased rapidly. Although during the year 1911 there had been only two new federations—all these figures are for unions surviving in 1924—in 1912 there were eight; in 1913, twelve; in 1914, eighteen. In 1915 the number of new federations dropped to seven, and the following year it was only nine. This falling off seems to have been a result of the war in Europe. People's attention was diverted from neighborhood concerns; and agricultural prosperity, resulting from America's position as purveyor to the world, relieved the pinch of necessity. With the entry of the United States into the war in 1917, changed conditions stimulated union. The release of ministers for service as chaplains and Y.M.C.A. workers left many churches without pastors. The rise in cost of living increased the expense of maintaining churches, while at the same time decreasing the margin out

of which church contributions were paid. Coal, in particular, was not only high in price but was so much needed for war purposes that patriotism as well as poverty urged economy in the use of it. Red Cross activities and Liberty bond drives accustomed people to common activities. As one schedule put it, "The people worked together during the war and got acquainted." Many churches formed a partnership, either definitely as an emergency measure, or tentatively, with the hope of permanence if all went well; or they found war motives and war idealism the last straw needed to carry them to the decision to join together in a permanent union. The number of new federations jumped from nine in 1916 to twenty-one in 1917, thirty-three in 1918, and forty-three in 1919.

After that, the immediate effects of the war being well past, the number of new federations was in most years smaller; yet in 1923, the latest year for which full information could be obtained, the number of new federations that survived in 1924 was twenty-eight, an average of more than one a fortnight.

The development of undenominational churches followed much the same course. For denominational united churches it was impossible to get complete information, since dates could be inferred from figures in denominational reports only for consolidated churches—that is, those formed by the combination of two or more existing church organizations. Of this class, the number formed annually increased suddenly in 1920, partly through the influence of state federations of churches and home-missions councils started after the war.

UNITED CHURCHES IN 1924

In 1924, the number of united churches found in the town and country area of the northern and western states was 977. They were distributed among four types as follows:

Federated churches	312
Undenominational churches	137

Denominational united churches	491
Affiliated churches [1]	37

The figure for federated churches included virtually all examples in the field studied. That for undenominational churches included nearly all. The figures for denominational united churches, however, was probably too small, as the united churches of this type were much harder to identify. After the list was made, many new unions were doubtless formed; for example, in the first six months of 1925 four new federations were formed in one small state.

The comparative numbers of united churches of all types

DIAGRAM I. MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF 977 UNITED CHURCHES.

taken together in the different regions [2] of the field studied, corresponds roughly to the numbers of churches of the traditional kind. That is, they were most numerous in the Middle West, the Northern Colonial area ranking next in

[1] In the statistical tables, the affiliated churches were included among denominational united churches.

[2] The regional terms used in this book are applied as follows:
"Northern Colonial": New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.
"Middle West": The states included by the Census in its divisions East North Central and West North Central, except that Missouri is omitted.
"Mountain" and "Pacific": the groups of states to which the Census applies these terms.

number of united churches, and the Pacific third, the smallest number of all being found in the Mountain Region.[3]

Among types of union, nearly half the federated churches were in the Northern Colonial area, where they formed the greater proportion of all united churches, most of them being in New England and in New York state. In each area studied except the Northern Colonial, the denominational united church was represented by more churches than any other type. The undenominational church had its greatest strength in the Middle West.

United churches were found to be, for the most part, a phenomenon of small centers.[4] Although of the town and country churches in 179 counties studied as typical by the Institute of Social and Religious Research only about one-third were in villages,[5] nearly two-thirds of the 934 united churches whose location was exactly known were village churches. Moreover, while only 131 united churches were in villages of more than 1,000 inhabitants, there were 450 in smaller villages. As 234 more of the 934 churches were in hamlets and 83 were in the open country, nearly five-sixths of the united churches were in localities having a population of the center of less than 1,000.

The denominations represented by the greatest number of denominational united churches and of federated churches were, in the order of the number of churches under each, the Congregational, the Methodist Episcopal, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and the Baptist, Northern Convention. The total number of denominational united churches, so far as these were listed, and of units of federated churches, belonging to these four denominations, was 1,075. Scattering cases of these two types of union belonged to thirteen other denominations.

Although statistical information could not be obtained for all united churches, certain figures were available for nearly three-fourths of those listed. The incomplete data show that these churches had a total membership of over

[3] See Appendix Table I.
[4] Ibid., II.
[5] Computed from data on page 35 of Morse's *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.* (New York, Doran, 1924.)

80,000, distributed such benevolences as are reported in denominational annuals in excess of $300,000, and owned churches and parsonages with a total valuation of over six and three-quarters millions of dollars.

The importance of the movement was further shown by other facts. The Presbyterian General Assembly and the Methodist Episcopal General Conference both passed several measures concerning the different types of union. For several years the leaders in the movement toward local union had met in conferences; and in 1925 they had two organizations, the Community Church Workers, formed at Philadelphia in May, 1924, and the American Conference of Undenominational Churches, a smaller group composed of leaders of united churches holding Fundamentalist principles. Each of these agencies had its organ, that of the former being the *Unity Messenger,* now the *Community Churchman,* and that of the latter the *Pioneer of a New Era.*

A great many unions, like the very first federated church, were formed by local people to meet local needs; both because it was the local people that felt most nearly the pinch of necessity, and because the barriers between denominations were less divisive for laymen in small communities. Some of the schedules reported that the union in question owed nothing to the example of any previous united church. Many constructed their constitutions independently, or emended a model, or combined several, so as to produce articles adapted to local conditions. The ministers sometimes led in local proceedings, and often had a large share in preparing the way for union; yet in a higher proportion of cases the effective leadership came from laymen. Even where denominational or interdenominational assistance was requested—even where such leadership took the initiative—it was the local people that had the deciding vote; and they frequently went contrary to the counsel of their advisors.

What this young movement was to become did not yet appear. In all parts of the country people were talking about uniting their churches, or about adapting their one

church so that it could serve all the religious elements of the community. That the movement would continue to grow seemed likely. In the first place, united churches were being formed all over the country; secondly, economic forces were on their side.

PART II

TYPES

PART II: TYPES

Chapter II

THE FEDERATED CHURCH

The development and the characteristics of united churches of four types will be presented in four successive chapters; a common plan being adopted, so far as possible, to enable the reader to follow easily the discussion of each of the types and to refer without trouble to corresponding passages. The present chapter will concern the federated church.

Definitions

It is necessary at the outset to define a few terms. A church, for this book, is an organized local group of Christians, with a religious test for membership. No church was included among those studied that was not active, in contrast to inactive or seasonal; that is, the churches considered here had regular services at least once a month throughout the year.

The term "united church" will be applied in this book to a church combining in its membership, either regular or associate, elements originally different in denomination; the elements being in some cases organized churches and in others, individuals. A church that had won to active participation in its work persons of other denominations, but that had not received such persons into membership, was held not to come within this definition.

There are three generally recognized types of united churches; the federated church, the undenominational church, and the united church of the denominational type. This common division was followed in the statistics. A

fourth type, the affiliated church, was found in the course of this survey to be arising spontaneously in many parts of the country.

A federated church is composed of two or more organized churches differing in denomination, each related to its own denominational body, which have entered into an agreement to act together as regards local affairs. The denominational units retain their own rolls, usually keep in the hands of their own trustees their separate property, and almost always continue to send benevolences to their separate denominational boards. They combine in calling and in paying a minister, hold services of worship in common, almost invariably conduct a common Sunday school, and frequently join in other local activities. Churches informally holding joint services for a temporary period were not held to constitute a federated church.

The term "federated" as part of the title of a church had two rare uses. It was employed by a few denominational united churches; as, "the Federated Congregational Church of ——." This usually meant that two or more churches had originally formed a federated church and had put the word "federated" in the title, and that this church had afterward become a united church of the denominational type without removing the word "federated" from the title. The word "federated" was also employed as part of the title of perhaps a dozen undenominational churches with no history of federation behind them. Most of these were in the far West. The term "federated church" will not be employed in this book in either of these two senses.

The denominational organizations combined in a federated church are called "branches," "wings," or "units." In this book, "unit" will be the term commonly employed.

A federated church differs from united churches of the other types in that although it conducts most of its activities as a single church, it preserves the organic integrity of its denominational elements. This double aspect of the federated church raises several questions peculiar to the type. Denominational officials and local church leaders were eager to know, on the one hand, how federation had affected the

separate denominational units; and on the other hand, how the double or multiple structure had affected the federation as a whole. They asked such questions as these:

When a weak church federated with a stronger one, what happened to the weaker church?

When an immersionist church federated with a non-immersionist church, what was the effect upon the immersionist unit?

Did the federation of two or more separately organized units frequently end in separation?

Did it, on the contrary, tend toward close integration? Because of the keen interest discovered in these questions, especial pains have been taken to gather, and to present in their appropriate places in this chapter, facts bearing upon them.

Sources of Information

Heretofore, opinions regarding federated churches have had to be based upon information concerning comparatively

DIAGRAM II. MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE EIGHTY-THREE UNITED CHURCHES SURVEYED.

few individual federations; and statements made about them have been unreliable and contradictory.

The statements made in this chapter are based upon the

following kinds of evidence: mail schedules from 129 federated churches; seventy-eight constitutions, some of these being standard forms used by many churches; notes on interviews with more than 145 superintendents of many denominations, who together furnished facts concerning many federated churches; intensive surveys of twenty-nine federations made on the ground by investigators of the Institute of Social and Religious Research; and data from denominational statistics for 457 units of 243 federated churches.

Number and Distribution

The number of federated churches discovered in 1924 in the thirty states forming the field of this investigation, was 312. At that time this was probably a fairly exact figure; for it is comparatively easy, with the help of denominational annual statistics and denominational superintendents, to learn the location of existing federated churches. The latter part of 1924, however, and the time since, have seen the organization of additional unions of this type.

Nearly half, 48.4 per cent., of these federated churches were found in the Northern Colonial area. Most of the small communities in this part of the country had early established competing churches. It was here also that the first federated churches were established. In the Middle West there were also many federated churches, the 125 found here constituting 40.1 per cent. of the entire number. As this region is so much larger than the Northern Colonial area, and has so many more inhabitants, the federated churches did not bulk so large in the religious situation. Comparatively few federated churches were discovered in the Mountain area, the list consisting of only twelve. In the states along the Pacific coast there were twenty-four.

The federated church proved to be mainly a phenomenon of villages and hamlets, where were found 267, or 90.5 per cent., of the entire number. This followed from the fact that federation implied the previous existence of two or more churches close enough together to admit of common services. On the other hand, only sixteen were found in

towns; and of those in villages, three-fourths, 76.4 per cent., were in small villages with a population not exceeding 1,000, where the stringency of material conditions that formed so potent an influence toward union was most keenly felt.

Denominations of Units

The denominational connection of 643 units constituting 303 federated churches was learned. These units were distributed among denominations as follows:

Northern Baptist	118
Congregational	197
Methodist Episcopal	178
Presbyterian in the U.S.A.	77
14 other denominations	73

Seven-eighths of all the units belonged to four major Protestant denominations. One of these, the Northern Baptist Convention, was an immersionist denomination,[1] as were three other bodies, each represented by comparatively few units; so that there were in all 146 immersionist units. Three liturgical denominations, the Lutheran and two Reformed bodies, were represented by a total of thirteen units. No foreign-language churches had become parts of federated churches; no churches of the emotional type; and, of course, no Catholic or other non-Protestant churches. Most of the other units represented the Congregational, the Methodist Episcopal and the Northern Presbyterian denominations; and the remainder belonged to eight other denominations, the Evangelical, the Methodist Episcopal South, the Methodist Protestant, the Friends, the United Brethren, the Unitarian, the United Presbyterian, and the Universalist. In the classification here followed, these denominations were included with others in a class called "all other Protestant denominations." But because the list of denominations

[1] The classification of denominations followed is that used in the *Town and Country Church in the United States*, p. 108.

given by the Census of Religious Bodies includes twenty-six Protestant denominations not belonging to any other of these classes, of which at least fifteen denominations were not represented in local unions and are not comparable in character to the eleven denominations that were represented in unions, the smaller group, which is represented in town and country areas by more churches than any of the other types, will be considered in this book to form a distinct type, which will be styled the "numerically predominant," or, for brevity, the "predominant" type. Grouped according to types of denominations the units were distributed thus:

Liturgical type	13
Immersionist type	146
Predominant type	484

In short, almost all the units belonged to two types of denominations, the immersionist and the predominant types; and three-fourths of all the units represented denominations of the predominant type.

Most federated churches consisted of pairs of units: thirty-nine were composed of three units each. The combinations in which units of the different denominational types appeared in federated churches were these:

Liturgical with predominant	12
Immersionist only	4
Immersionist with predominant	137
Predominant only	149
Total	302 [2]

Very few either of liturgical or of immersionist churches had federated with churches representing denominations of the same class; even including federations in which two units of such denominations were combined with a unit of the

[2] One additional federated church was composed of an immersionist unit and an undenominational unit.

predominant type, there was but one federated church including two units of denominations of the liturgical type, and there were only six combining two immersionist churches. This did not result from any lack of communities having two churches each of either of those denominational types. Many a community had, for example, both a Lutheran church and one of the predominant type. A similar situation existed for immersionist churches: of all the Disciples churches in the town and country communities of Ohio, for instance, nearly one-fifth were in the presence either of a Northern Baptist church or of a Christian church. Considered with respect to the way units of different denominational types were combined, the great majority of federated churches fell into two groups: 137 federations in which immersionist units were combined with units of the predominant type, and 149 federations in which each of the two or three units belonged to some denomination of the predominant type.

Membership

Though the units federating had a low average membership, when combined in pairs or in groups of three they formed churches with an average membership higher than the averages for churches of the traditional kind in communities comparable in population. For 189 federated churches the membership of each of whose units was published in some denominational annual report, the average total membership was 172.

The average total membership of village churches of 179 Counties investigated by the Institute of Social and Religious Research was 108. The population of the villages ranged from 250 to 2,500, small villages being everywhere the most numerous. The average total membership found by the American Village Study was 157 in villages, most of which had a population of between 500 and 2,500. Since federated churches were found in hamlets as well as in villages, and since they were more common in small villages than in large ones, their average total membership of 172

considerably exceeded the average membership of traditional churches of much larger communities.

Some federated churches had also, in addition to members of the original uniting denominations, a list of "federated," or "community," members. This feature was not common in the Northern Colonial area, where, especially in New England, denominational superintendents coöperated in forming and guiding the federated churches. In the Middle West, however, provision for such a roll was made by at least sixteen churches. On the other hand, it was definitely learned that in the Middle West seventeen churches had no such arrangement; and the mail schedules for twenty others, while giving figures for denominational membership, left unanswered the question concerning undenominational membership, thus making it probable that they had no such roll. Of the thirty-six federated churches in the Mountain and the Pacific coast areas, ten were discovered to have undenominational members. In the last area, the undenominational enrollment averaged much higher than elsewhere; one federated church having sixty-six undenominational to ninety-three denominational members.

GROWTH OR DECLINE

The number of additions reported for 1923-24 by denominational statistics for 243 federated churches was 2,034, a number forming 5.5 per cent. of the total membership at the end of the year.

How had membership changed since federation? Comparative figures were available for 167 federated churches. The year before union, the total membership of all the churches involved, then separate, was 28,609. In 1923-24, the corresponding total for units of federated churches was 28,203. This meant a loss of 406 members, that is, a decline in membership of 1.4 per cent. The federated churches had not quite held their own in membership. This fact was partly accounted for by the clearing of the rolls that normally accompanies any crisis of church history. The average per federation, however, fell only from 172 to 169. The decline

was highest in the Middle West, where it was 3.5 per cent., the loss being to some extent compensated by a gain on the Pacific coast. In considering comparative membership, however, account must be taken of undenominational members. In the Northern Colonial area the presence of such members did not make up for the decline in denominational membership. In other areas, taken together, it more than did so; for the incomplete total of undenominational members reported for twenty-one churches in these areas was more than 600.

Some indication of the effect of federation on size of membership was afforded by comparative figures for two groups of federated churches at least eleven years old in 1923-24, the year of the latest denominational statistics available. One group was composed of twenty-four federated churches in New England, and the other consisted of fourteen such churches in the Middle West. The groups could not be larger, first, because federations formed so early were not very numerous, especially in the Middle West; and, secondly, because for some early federations, statistical information was not available for all units. For the group of federated churches in New England, the average combined total membership five years before the year of union was 131. In the next four years it slightly declined, becoming 128. Two years later, the first year after the year of union, the average membership had fallen to 116, partly, doubtless, because of the clearing of rolls. Five years after union, the reported membership was only ninety-five.

The middle-western group of churches had experienced in the earlier four-year interval, while still separate denominational churches, a drop in average membership from 182 to 156. Evidently a decline in numbers preceded the federation. In the two years in the course of which federation took place, in spite of probable clearing of rolls, the average remained about the same, standing the year after the year of union at 157. Four years later, the average membership was 163. This did not represent a great gain, but at least it was not a loss, as was found to exist for the churches in New England. Considering the difference in the

trend of population and of economic conditions of the two areas, it therefore seems probable that the growth and decline of federated churches, like that of denominational churches, varies with environmental conditions. Many of the churches that federated were inactive, or at least very small. In Vermont and certain other states, denominational authorities were convinced that through federation many weak churches had been saved from decay and death.

SMALL UNITS

When a small church federated with a large one, did the stronger gain in membership at the expense of the weaker? For eighty federations, one unit of which had before union a membership not over five-eighths that of the other, the total membership of the weaker units, which the year before federation formed 28.1 per cent. of the combined membership, had risen by 1923-24 to 31.7 per cent., indicating a slight gain for the smaller unit. Moreover, though the total combined membership of the federated churches showed a loss, the total membership of the smaller units showed a gain. Thirty-three of the smaller units gained in membership; and in sixteen of the cases the larger unit lost. For five of the federated churches, what was before union the smaller unit, had in 1923-24 become the larger. Many small churches weakened to the danger point were enabled by federation to continue their activities, and to hold their own, sometimes even to increase, in membership. By combining forces with another church, each was enabled to share the services of a better minister, and to participate in a better program. Moreover, newcomers who might not join a weak church of their own denomination where there was a strong church of another denomination doing better work, would enroll themselves with the unit of their traditional adherence, on joining a federated church. For these reasons, when two churches of unequal strength federated, the smaller church usually held or increased its proportionate membership thereafter.

IMMERSIONIST UNITS

When an immersionist church federated with a church of the "predominant" type, what effect, if any, was produced upon the membership of the immersionist unit? A comparative analysis was made of the membership before union and in 1923 of federated churches so constituted, the number for which figures were available being eighty-three. The year preceding union the membership of the immersionist units formed 42.6 per cent. of the combined membership; in 1923-24 the proportion was 42.1 per cent., thus having scarcely changed. For six federated churches the membership of the immersionist units remained the same. For fifty-two it declined; but in thirty-nine of these the combined membership also declined. For twenty-five federations the membership of the immersionist units increased, and for ten of these the gain was in spite of a loss in combined membership. On the whole, therefore, federation did not result for immersionist units in a decline in membership. The explanation offered by several denominational and interdenominational officials was the same as for units of federations composed of elements of unequal strength.

Organization

The common affairs of federated churches were conducted by a joint committee, which was given various names, such as executive committee, governing board, and the like. It was usually composed, at least in early stages of federation, of groups representing the denominational units. The most common number of representatives per unit was three, but the number was sometimes five or even seven. The term of service was sometimes one year, but was more commonly three, the terms of different individuals overlapping. A few churches with a large undenominational membership gave this element representation on the governing board. Members of the board were usually chosen at first by the units sitting in separate session. Later on, some federated churches no longer held separate meetings, but both units

voted in a joint meeting on their separate candidates, which were either selected by a committee chosen for the purpose or by the governing board, or were nominated from the floor. Other federated churches chose their board not as representing the interests of the units separately, but as acting for the federation as a whole, there being a single list of candidates, in which the names were sometimes followed by the denomination of each candidate. This arrangement came to be adopted by all but three of fourteen churches studied at two stages. Some federated churches attempted to choose their representatives on the governing board and their other officers somewhat proportionately from the denominations represented; but others lost sight of such distinctions and considered only fitness for the task. Deacons and elders, however, were usually chosen by the denominational units.

The extent to which separate denominational machinery continued to function differed considerably. At first the denominational units generally held their separate annual meetings; and sessions, or advisory boards, or prudential committees, came together at intervals. But as joint activities developed, business came more and more to be transacted through the common executive board; and the separate bodies gradually atrophied.

Finances

The earliest federated churches had the arrangement that each unit should raise separately and pay toward the common expenses a certain proportion of the budget. If there were two churches only, the most common arrangement was that each should pay half; but the sums were often apportioned according to membership, or with regard to financial ability. Arrangements of this sort were in use with some federated churches, especially in New England.

Survival of denominational financial arrangements, with the addition of common financial machinery for joint affairs, sometimes resulted in a decidedly complex system. One of the older federations had eleven treasurers. There were the treasurer for local affairs of the Congregational

parish, of the Congregational church, and of the Methodist Episcopal church; the treasurer of the federated church; the treasurer for benevolences of each of the units; three treasurers for the Women's Society, including one for joint local business and two for separate benevolences; a treasurer for the Christian Endeavor and one for the Sunday school. Two men held two treasurerships apiece.

But many churches that began with separate financial arrangements for each unit came to adopt a common canvass and to have a single treasurer. Of fourteen churches for which detailed information was obtained concerning two different stages of development, all of them federated churches at one or both of these periods, five had separate budgets and nine had joint budgets at the earlier period, while at the later period each of the fourteen had a single budget. Of forty-two federated churches for which exact information on this point was collected, only seven had separate budgets for each unit, while thirty-five of the churches had each a single budget.

LOCAL EXPENDITURE

A good many churches considering federation had been influenced by the hope that they might reduce their expenses of maintenance by having but one coal bill, one janitor, etc. Other churches had been led to combine forces largely by the hope that in that way they might be able to pay for a better minister, have a better place of worship, and conduct a richer program. One set desired economy; the other, increased efficiency. What actually happened was shown by a comparison of home expenditures before union and in 1923-24. It was often impossible to tell whether or not the sums reported to the separate denominational agencies overlapped, for many federated churches had a common budget; and treasurers, not seeing how to distribute this total, had in many cases reported the full amount to both. Since the time of year for requiring such reports differs with different denominations, the sums thus reported, even though each covered the expenditures of a full year, were sometimes dif-

ferent. In some cases the total reported to one denomination included everything but repairs to a building of another denomination. In the absence of precise information, the finances of many churches had to be left out of account. Therefore, the averages now to be presented are based on figures for federated churches surveyed; for those about which it was known that each unit had a separate budget; and for those reporting only to one denomination; because it was only for these churches that it was known there was no duplication. The number of churches for which reliable figures were obtainable for all units was sixty-one. The average combined local expenditures the year before union of the two or more churches that later formed any one federated church was $2,050. If each federation had consisted of two units, this would have meant for the separate churches an average of $1,025; but as some had three units, the average was less. For the federated churches in the year 1923-24, the average local expenditure was $2,224. Evidently the average total expenditure per community, instead of diminishing, became larger.

But these averages included figures for federated churches in widely different environments. In the Northern Colonial area, the average combined local expenditure of the churches that later formed one federated church was $1,282 the year before union—or less than $641 per separate church; and the average for the federated churches in 1923-24 was $1,835. In the Middle West, on the other hand, $2,847 was the average combined expenditure the year before union of the churches later forming one federation; while in 1923-24 the average expenditure of the federated church was only $2,660. That is, poor churches in the Northern Colonial area, with low expenditures before union, gained on the average in service and efficiency; those in the Middle West, on the whole, though their larger average expenditure indicated a higher standard of church maintenance than in the other section, nevertheless gained in economy.

To determine whether these local budget figures of federated churches are high or low, they need to be compared with standard averages. In twenty-five typical counties

studied in detail by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, the average annual local expenditure for all churches, including those in towns, in villages, and in the country, was $913.[3] The average found by the American Village Study to prevail for village churches, was $1,561, and that for churches in villages with a population of under 1,000, was $1,665. In comparison with all these figures, the average for federated churches was large.

Besides drawing on the contributors of two or more denominational churches, the federated churches surveyed enlisted wider support from non-members than did competing churches. For nineteen federated churches whose subscription lists were examined in detail, one-fifth of the subscribers were non-members, and these non-members furnished nearly one-eighth of the total amount subscribed.

The average local expenditures per individual of the total membership[4] was comparatively high. For the Twenty-five Counties the corresponding contribution was $10.60;[5] for village churches surveyed in the course of the American Village Study it was $10.24. For federated churches it was $13.39. In the Middle West, in spite of the larger budget of this area, it was lower—only $11.75—because average membership there was much higher than in the Northern Colonial area.

[3] Computed from figures given on page 80 of *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.* (New York, Doran, 1924.)

[4] The term "per capita expenditure" will be applied in this book to the amount expended annually corresponding to each individual of the total membership. It is not the average contribution of church members; for, in the first place, members did not all contribute, one-fifth being non-resident and others inactive; secondly, one-fourth of the subscribers to churches investigated were non-members; and finally, part of the funds spent by some churches were derived from sales or from the income of investments. The term will be used in connection with total expenditure, with local expenditure and with benevolences. In each case it will signify the ratio of the expenditure of whichever kind to the total membership.

[5] The figures for salary and miscellaneous expenses on page 80 of *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas* added together make $12.17; but these figures were based on resident membership, while the nature of denominational published statistics made it necessary to use in this book only figures based on total membership.

SALARY

Of the comparatively large local budget of the average federated church, a considerable proportion went into salary. Before federation many of the churches had been able to afford only part-time, non-resident ministers; and many of the churches had to put up with students or superannuated men. Some had been without ministers. In one case a somewhat isolated community had met the epidemic of influenza without a single minister. With no pastor to console the dying, and with great difficulty in securing any one to officiate at funerals, the local people received such a lesson on the value of a resident minister that union of all elements came swiftly. Under these and similar circumstances, it was therefore to be expected that average salaries would be large. The averages given here are for fifty-five federated churches with a Congregational unit, these being chosen because the *Congregational Year-Book* consistently gives the total cash salary, while for other cases partial and possibly overlapping sums would have had to be pieced together, with doubtful results.

For these fifty-five federated churches, the average annual cash expenditure for salary of minister was $1,615. Parallel averages for strictly denominational churches were as follows: for the Twenty-five Counties, all kinds of communities, $539;[6] for a group of 331 small farming villages in the Middle West, $732; for villages of fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, $1,110; and for villages of approximately 500 to 2,500, $998. The average salary received by ministers —this ran larger because many ministers served more than one church—was for the Twenty-five Counties $1,030,[7] the sum of $250 being allowed, however, for every minister granted the free use of a parsonage. This average was for ministers serving communities of all sizes, and for full-time and part-time ministers indiscriminately. In the 179 Counties, ministers serving only one church—as did the majority

[6] Computed from data on pages 80 and 81 of *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.*

[7] Morse and Brunner, *The Town and Country Church in the United States.* (New York; Doran, 1923), p. 147

of ministers serving federated churches—received as cash salary $1,430.[8] In comparison with these figures, the average payment of $1,615 expended in salary by the federated church, was high, even surpassing averages for salaries received by ministers. The amount per member expended for salary, which for the Twenty-five Counties was $6.17,[9] for federated churches was $10.23.

The expenses connected with property, including repairs, improvements, and insurance, were in some cases met by the unit owning each building. Sometimes property used in common was maintained out of the common budget, the provision often being made that no considerable alteration should be undertaken without the consent of the unit owning the property. Usually, however, the property of all the units was maintained by the federated church as a whole. Of forty federated churches about which information on this point was available, the units of only fourteen cared for their separate property; and for twenty-six the care of such property was a matter of joint concern.

BENEVOLENCES

One of the most heated differences of opinion concerning federated churches was connected with denominational benevolences. Such contributions were asserted by some to have increased since union; but by many people they were declared to have declined. Fortunately this was a matter about which it was possible to obtain precise information; for the denominations represented by most of the units combining in federations publish annually statistics showing just what has been contributed by each of their churches.

An attempt was made to obtain for as many federated churches as possible the exact sums contributed the year before union by churches that afterward federated, and also the sums contributed by the same churches, then units of federations, in the year 1923-24. No federated churches could be included, of course, that were organized after 1922;

[8] *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*, p. 81.

[9] Ibid., p. 80. The per capita is given as $7.06, but this figure was based on resident membership.

nor any units belonging to denominations that do not publish statistics; nor any units the data for which at either period were recorded only for circuits. The federated churches for which data were available numbered 167. The combined average benevolences before union were $389. This sum, be it remembered, was a total for two or more churches then separate; so that the average benevolent contribution of the denominational churches was less than half of this; that is, less than $195. The average for the federated churches in 1923-24 was $647. This represented a gain in benevolences of $258 per federation, constituting a proportionate increase of 66.2 per cent. Not every unit enlarged its contribution; but 116 did. The gain in the Middle West, where before union the federating churches had been larger, was 38.2 per cent.; and the average contribution in 1923-24 was $764. In the Northern Colonial area, however, where the churches combining had been smaller and poorer, the average combined benevolences rose from $238 the year before union, to $583 in 1923-24, the gain being $345 for each federated church, or 145.1 per cent. That is, these churches since federation had multiplied their total contributions nearly two and one-half times.

The average annual contribution to benevolences per individual of the total membership was for the whole field $2.27 the year before union, and $3.83 in 1923-24; that of the churches in the Northern Colonial area rising from $1.76 the year before union to $4.39 in 1923-24.

While the total amount reported in denominational statistics as the annual contributions to benevolences of the separate churches for the year before union was $65,034, the total contributions of the same churches—then combined in federations—in 1923-24, amounted to $108,089. Since the formation of these 167 federations, accordingly, there had been a net gain in benevolences of $43,055.

That this gain was due entirely to federation cannot be proved, especially because of the complexity of economic conditions during and after the war. Many factors entered into the result. The contributions of some churches, for example, were doubtless raised during the interval by de-

nominational drives. Yet the effect of these campaigns worked both ways; for 117 federations were formed so late that they would have felt the impetus of denominational campaigns the year before federation more strongly than in 1923-24, when both enthusiasm and total contributions had begun to wane. Federation certainly played the largest part in the change. The relief it brought to many churches in the burden of home expenditures released funds for benevolent use. Many units that before union had been inactive, had their generosity spurred after federation by canvasses, appeals and regular collections. Almost all felt the stimulus of improved ministerial leadership, of a richer program, of friendly rivalry between federating units, and of the fresh start.

Not only did the benevolences of federated churches increase after union; they compared in 1923-24 less unfavorably than is supposed with those of strictly denominational churches. The average benevolence contribution of 243 federated churches for 1923-24 was $581. That for the churches in Twenty-five Counties was only $399.[10] Though the averages obtained in the American Village Study were higher, being $749 for Small Villages, and $729 for all villages, these figures referred in great measure to the churches of larger communities than those where most of the federated churches were situated.

For the sixty-one churches for which there were available figures for expenditures before union and in 1923-24, the proportion of total expenditures devoted to benevolences, which the year before union was 14.5 per cent., had risen to 22.4 per cent., in 1923-24. The proportion for the Twenty-five Counties was 30.4 per cent.[11] and for the churches in Small Villages 31.0 per cent.

Property

Because the denominations do not all report a valuation for property, it can only be asserted that the total valuation

[10] Computed from data on pp. 80 and 81, *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.*

[11] Ibid., p. 81.

of church buildings and parsonages owned by less than three-fourths of the units of federated churches, approximated $3,000,000. The average valuation of the church buildings and parsonages of 112 federated churches for which information was available for all units, was $16,039. One hundred and sixteen federated churches had two church buildings each; four had three. Not fewer than fifty-six federations had two parsonages; at least three had three parsonages each.

Church buildings were frequently used alternately; sometimes they were devoted to special uses; and in some cases, one or more buildings having been disposed of, or lost by fire or otherwise, there was only one church edifice. Among forty-one churches in regard to which information on this point was collected, twenty-two had at least two church edifices adapted for worship; both or all of which, in nineteen cases, were used during part of the year. The other nineteen federated churches either had only one building, or had adapted their buildings to special uses. Eleven of the fourteen churches for which detailed information at two periods was obtained, had adopted one or the other of the last mentioned arrangements, both of which implied community of interests.

Minister

Two hundred and twenty-seven federated churches, or 72.8 per cent. of the entire number, had resident ministers. This proportion was more than twice as high as that prevailing in the 179 Counties, which was only 35.5 per cent.,[12] and was only one point lower than that prevailing in the 140 Villages, which were communities of a much larger average population. Moreover, while the latter proportion applied to all churches including those in towns, federated churches were very largely in Small Villages and hamlets, where the proportion would naturally be much lower.

Several different arrangements prevailed among federated churches as to the denomination of ministers. The majority

[12] *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*, p. 37.

chose their ministers alternately from the denominations represented. Other federations had agreed to accept ministerial leadership from one denomination exclusively. This latter arrangement was most common in Vermont, where denominational leaders made special efforts to induce the churches to accept it when the church of one denomination was considerably the stronger. Other federated churches had agreed that the denomination of the minister should not affect their choice. For 264 federated churches with ministers whose denomination was known, the ministers of 250 churches belonged to one of the denominations represented in the federation served; for only fourteen of these churches did the minister belong to some other denomination. The denominations represented by the ministers were as follows: Methodist, ninety-four; Congregational, sixty-nine; Baptist, forty-seven; Presbyterian, thirty-nine; all other denominations, fifteen.[13]

Subordinate Organizations

Federated churches almost always had a common Sunday school, the former schools of the different units having usually been merged at the time of union. Of forty-two federated churches in regard to which detailed information was available, only one had two Sunday schools. The young people's societies, moreover, were almost as generally joint organizations. Thirty-seven of the forty-two churches had such societies; and only two of these had separate organizations for the denominational units. The ladies' aid society was a combined organization for thirty-one churches; nine churches had one or more denominational organizations of the sort; two churches had no such organization. To combine women's missionary societies proved more difficult on account of the difference in study courses and the separate objects of benevolences. Twenty-two of the forty-two churches, however, had joint missionary societies, while thirteen had denominational organizations, the other seven churches being without societies of this sort. Where the

[13] In two cases the denomination of the minister was uncertain.

women's organizations were combined, testimony was frequently borne to an increase in the pleasure taken both in work and in social relations. Ministers who had observed the effect of combining women's organizations believed that this step did much to unify not only women but through them the other members of their families.

Nine Points of Usage

Reference has been made in a number of connections to the study of forty-two federated churches to ascertain how many acted as a single body in regard to certain matters and how many acted as two or more separate denominational units. The points studied included combinations of the four different kinds of subordinate organizations just considered, the management of local expenditures, the care of property, representation on the governing board, the presence or absence of extra buildings for worship, and regard to denomination in the choice of minister. The average number of points in which these federated churches acted jointly was 5.8, and the average number in which they acted as pairs or groups of units was 2.7.[14]

Among the forty-two churches, there were five that did not act as separate units in regard to any of the nine points. The age of these five churches ranged from seven to twenty-two years. Eight other federated churches acted as separate units on only one point, which was invariably the appointment of the governing board to represent the units separately. Of this group of churches, two were four years old, four were six years old, and the others were nine and ten years old, respectively. Eleven federated churches acted jointly on all but two points, which invariably included representation on the governing board. The other point in the largest number of cases was separate women's missionary societies.

Of the churches in this third group, all but three ranged in age from six to eleven years. Of the first group three, and of the second group at least two, had revised their con-

[14] In some cases not all the nine tests applied, and in others information was lacking.

stitutions. There appeared to be on the part of federated churches a connection between action as a single body and the length of time they had been federated.

This inference was strengthened by a study of fourteen cases for which detailed information was obtained for two different periods of development. These fourteen churches, to a considerable extent, had changed their original methods to methods involving a closer unity of action. Although at the earlier stage they had acted jointly in regard to an average of four points of procedure, at the later period this average had risen to 7.8 points. The number of churches choosing the members of the governing board to represent the church as a whole, which was only one at the earlier stage, at the second had become eleven; the number with a common local budget rose from eight to fourteen; the number without extra buildings for worship rose from three to eleven. Those repairing and improving the property of the units from common funds, increased from six to thirteen. The number with a joint ladies' aid society went up from six to fourteen; those with a federated women's missionary society, from four became nine; those with one Sunday school increased from twelve to fourteen; and those with a common young people's society rose from five to nine. The selection of a minister from the denominations alternately was not practiced at the later period in a single instance.

To find out whether there was any difference in respect to these practices between surviving federations and federations that ended in separation, a schedule including questions relating to the same points was mailed to persons in eighty communities where federation had ended in partial or complete separation. The inquiry resulted in thirty-two schedules with careful answers. The average number of points of procedure on which the unsuccessful federations had coöperated was only 3.1; while for the forty-two surviving federations, it was 5.8, nearly twice as many. On the other hand, the number of points in which the federated churches that separated had acted as pairs or groups of units was 4.3, much larger than that for surviving federations, which was 2.7.

Was coöperative action merely a manifestation of that spirit of unity without which federation could not last and granting which union became progressively closer? Or did divided interests tend to perpetuate the sense of separate individuality? Ministers who had been in close contact with such experiments believed that both factors entered into the explanation, and that in practice the greatest measure of unified action for which the local people were prepared conduced both to smoothness of operation and to permanence.

Tendencies

How large a proportion of federated churches endured? A careful attempt was made to list all localities where federation had been tried and abandoned. Since experiments of this nature often left no traces in denominational statistics, it was impossible to make sure that the list was complete. But a record was made of eighty cases of separation. In some of these cases the separation was only partial, and in a few instances the interrupted union was later renewed. The number of known situations where federation was ruptured was at least one-fourth as large as the number of federations surviving in 1924. The proportion of federated churches that survived was twice as high in New England as it was in fourteen states where economic pressure was on the whole less constraining, where interdenominational cooperation was less developed, and where denominational superintendents did not offer the same guidance in arranging terms of federation.

For seventy cases of separation, the approximate length of time the pairs or groups of denominational churches had been in partnership was ascertained. Forty, or well over half, had remained together not more than two years, the partnership in many cases having lasted only a few months. Twenty-two had separated after a period of between two and five years; eight had separated after five years or more of coöperation; and three after ten years or more of coöperation. It was evident then that after two years a

federated church was likely to be permanent, and that after five years only a few such unions were broken. The number of federated churches organized before 1920, and therefore at least five years old at the time of the survey, was 165; and the number organized before 1915, and therefore at least ten years old, was fifty-two. The average age of 299 federations for which the dates of origin were learned was rather more than five years.

Although a considerable number of federations were abandoned, the majority of federated churches had become progressively more closely united. Beginning, perhaps, with a loose partnership of units that strongly felt their separate identity, federated churches gradually changed their methods so that they acted more and more as single wholes.

More than twenty unions that began as federated churches had in 1924 either become denominational churches or had affiliated with a denomination more loosely; and at least seven unions that had once been federated churches had become undenominational churches.

Many denominational superintendents on the one hand and leaders in the community church movement on the other, considered it unlikely that federated churches would maintain allegiance to two or more separate denominational bodies through the lives of a second or at least a third generation of the members. However this may be, the facts in this chapter show that in 1924 federated churches were performing several distinct functions. Federation enabled struggling churches that would not unite on any other basis to preserve their identity, and often to increase their strength, while at the same time uniting the religious forces of small communities. It at once prevented the waste of church funds in duplication and raised the standard of church services and program. It resulted in a considerable increase in contributions to the benevolent agencies of the denominations represented. It brought together, in relationships promoting increased understanding and sympathy, laymen of different denominations; and it gave their ministers a sympathetic attitude toward people of persuasions other than their own.

Chapter III

THE UNDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH

It is popularly supposed that there are many undenominational churches in the United States, 1,200 being a frequently published estimate of the total number. But the listing of cases of union revealed the fact that in 1924 there were comparatively few united churches of this type in town and country areas. The general overestimate resulted from the ambiguity of the terms "community church" and "union church."

In common usage the expression "community church" had six different significations. Some persons and agencies, including the Massachusetts Federation of Churches, meant by the term the only Protestant church in the community. The home-missions councils of certain states had formally adopted definitions according to which a community church must be the only Protestant church, and also a united church of the denominational type.[1] Others applied the term only to undenominational churches. Still others used it in a broader sense, making it include all churches—whether denominational or undenominational, and whether or not they were the only churches in their respective communities—the membership of which was open to all religious elements among the Protestants within reach, and which attempted to serve the general religious needs of their communities. The title was also claimed by certain churches strictly denominational in membership, which had undertaken a program of com-

[1] The Home Missions Council of Western Washington, for example, adopted the following definition: "'"*A Community Church" is understood to be a body of Christians worshiping in a certain district, representing all denominations coöperating with the Home Missions Council, and affiliated with one of the said denominations, but affording fellowship and Christian privilege for every Christian within its reach.*' If there is more than one organization, neither one can claim to be a Community Church, as it only serves a part of the district. . . ."

munity service. Finally, the word "community" had been incorporated in the titles of certain churches, simply as a popular expression useful in advertising the church.

Some persons, therefore, used the expression "community church" in reference only to undenominational churches, others in reference only to denominational churches, while still others used the term to include both. Now 1,200 was a fair estimate of the number of community churches of all types combined. The mistake has been in assuming that the 1,200 "community churches" were all undenominational.

The term "union church" was also employed in several senses: sometimes in reference to a building used in common either by two or more denominational churches, or by all denominational elements in a community; sometimes to an informal group of people that combined in holding services and Sunday school, as for example in a schoolhouse. It was also applied to a religious society with trustees for the holding of property; but without the distinctive church organization, to which members are admitted only on profession of faith. Finally, it was used to denote an undenominational organized church.

In this book the term, when it is used at all, will refer only to an undenominational church organization with a religious condition for membership. Because of the ambiguity of the term "union church," the expression "undenominational church" will usually be employed here, always in the sense of an organized church not connected with any denominational body.

To obtain data for undenominational churches involved serious difficulties. For united churches of this type, systematic information parallel to that published for denominational churches, and therefore for the units of federated churches also, was available only for Massachusetts, where it was published by the state federation of churches. There were therefore no comprehensive statistics as to membership, finances, or property; and the names and addresses of ministers were not generally available. Even to make the list of churches that was indispensable before requests for information could be sent out, required the following up of

clews from many sources, the dispatching of many forms of inquiry, and where it proved difficult to check the existence of a reported church of this type, the writing of letters to ministers in communities near that in which such a church was reported to exist.

This search showed that many supposed undenominational churches did not fall into that classification; and that in some instances they never had been churches of that type. Some were denominational churches using the title "community church." Some were merely buildings which were called "union churches" but with which no church organization was connected, though there may or may not have been a secular "society." In still other cases, when there was no church organization, the term was applied if union services or a union Sunday school were maintained. Some had once been genuine undenominational churches, but had either fallen into inactivity or had become connected with a denomination. Of the genuine undenominational churches reported, a considerable number were situated in suburbs, which were outside the field of the investigation. The total number of undenominational churches in town and country area of the northern and western parts of the United States discovered through careful and repeated inquiries, was only 137.

To procure statistics for undenominational churches comparable in comprehensiveness and value to those obtained from denominational annuals for the churches of the other two types of union, proved to be impossible. Data for past years could not be secured at all, except for a few churches formed through the union of previously existing denominational churches. To procure current data, a special form of questions was sent to all such churches; and this was in many instances sent several times, to the same or to different addresses, and was in a considerable number of instances sent to a minister in a neighboring community to be forwarded to the minister of the supposed undenominational church, or to some other person able to furnish information.

In spite of unusual difficulty in obtaining replies, there was collected concerning churches of this type material of

the following kinds: mail schedules for fifty churches; special schedules for forty-seven; constitutions for forty-four; statistical data from the Massachusetts Federation of Churches for all the rural undenominational churches in Massachusetts; and surveys by investigators of the Institute of Social and Religious Research for eighteen churches. Detailed information of one or more of these kinds was obtained for ninety of the 137 undenominational churches known to exist in town and country area.

Some information, though in far less detail, was obtained from interviews or correspondence concerning sixteen more of these churches; and the existence, at least, of all the others was verified. Of the undenominational churches about which the information was scanty, fourteen were in hamlets or in the open country, and fifteen were in villages with a population of not over 500. Of these churches, therefore, a considerable number were presumably small.

Since the study was so largely dependent upon voluntary replies to inquiries, the information received concerned in a disproportionate degree the strongest cases—the churches that had ministers, for example, and especially the churches that had reason to be proud of their record. Moreover, there proved to be unusual diversity among the churches of this type. A considerable number were small; a few were unusually large and vigorous. The averages and generalization here presented, therefore, do more than justice to the average undenominational church.

Because the statistics for the undenominational church were based on fewer examples than those for federated and denominational united churches, and for the other reasons just enumerated, they were less authoritative and significant; therefore illustrative examples will be used more freely in this chapter than in chapters in which churches of certain other types are discussed.

Development

Of ninety-one undenominational churches about the origin of which detailed knowledge was obtained, forty-one were

formed through the combination of two or more existing denominational churches, or of one denominational church and part of another.

The churches thus uniting to form undenominational churches represented the same denominations as the units of federated churches, about one-fourth having belonged to immersionist denominations and three-fourths to denominations of the predominant type. In the way the denominational churches were combined, too, these undenominational churches resembled federated churches: most such unions combined either immersionist churches with churches of the predominant type, or churches of the predominant type with other churches of the same kind. In certain instances the undenominational type of union had been chosen because denominational officials had opposed the formation of a federated church. In ten instances one denominational church threw off allegiance to its overhead body and in combination with individuals of other denominations formed an independent church. The other forty churches were composed of individuals of different denominational origins. An inactive church frequently formed one source of members. In two instances an attempt had been made to combine four different denominational churches. The resulting undenominational church was composed in both cases of members from each of the denominational churches; but all of these continued their existence in competition with the undenominational church, which, therefore, though organized to lessen competition, actually resulted in increasing it.

The union of individuals as an undenominational church was frequently in small rural communities. The people of the community were often of twenty different faiths or of none; so that there were not enough of any one denomination to serve as a nucleus. Sometimes the only denominational group was of a persuasion inacceptable to its neighbors. The report came from many places that the only choice was between an undenominational church and no church at all.

One of the main reasons for the organization of undenominational churches was the difficulty in bringing together

diverse denominational elements on any other basis. Other reasons for the choice of this form of union were: the desire to obtain larger support from persons who were not of any church; reaction against denominational competition within the local community, and against current conceptions of denominational abuse of home-mission funds; the desire to avoid assessments for denominational overhead expenses and denominational missionary campaigns; the example of some well-known undenominational church, usually not far away; and propaganda for this type of church.

Union as an undenominational church was often accomplished against unusual difficulties. A considerable number of these churches combined elements difficult to bring together; four of the unions including both an evangelical and a Unitarian or a Universalist church, and twenty-three uniting immersionist and non-immersionist elements. Again, the union frequently combined an unusual number of former denominational churches. Sixteen of the forty combinations of previously existing churches were composed of three churches, making a proportion far higher than that prevailing among federated churches; and three were composed of four or more churches. At least fourteen of the unions were achieved in spite of strong opposition from denominational officials. The fact that in nine communities part of at least one of the churches entering into the union had preserved its denominational identity, proves that in these places the union was formed against opposition on the part of some elements among the local people. In these situations, where union was won through struggle, the undenominational church had proved the only acceptable compromise.

Denominational officials, and interdenominational officials in most states where these existed, distrusted the undenominational church. Without such guidance as was received by denominational community churches, and in several states by federated churches—often in spite of determined opposition from denominational officials—undenominational churches were dependent in an even higher degree than churches of other types of union on local and on lay leadership. A local minister sometimes took the part of leader.

Sometimes a local minister helped to write the constitution; in two cases a similar part was played by a minister among summer residents. But as a rule the constitution was prepared by a local committee, or by a local lawyer, editor, or other capable layman.

The date of origin was learned for 111 undenominational churches; but for twenty-six it could not be learned, though it appeared probable that none of the latter were very old. The facts reported were necessarily confined to churches still in existence and still undenominational. Three churches on the list were organized before 1890, having grown out of the old tradition of the union church; two had survived, and one had been resuscitated within a few years. The old tradition, indeed, never died out; union churches continued to be organized; but so far as surviving undenominational churches afforded testimony, they came into existence one by one at long intervals; for of undenominational churches organized from 1890 to the end of 1911, only eight or nine survived in 1924. In each year from 1912 to 1916 inclusive, there originated from two to four surviving undenominational churches. The number formed annually then slowly increased till in 1920 fourteen were organized; and in 1921, eighteen. After that the number seemed to have fallen off; but this may have been owing to lack of information about many dates of organization. Of the 111 surviving undenominational churches for which the dates of organization were ascertained, at least eighty-eight were organized or became undenominational in the ten years next preceding the year 1924.

Distribution [2]

There were some strong undenominational churches in the Northern Colonial area; but in this area were found only thirty-nine of the 137 churches of this type included in the list. Twenty-six were found on the Pacific coast and twelve in the Mountain area. The type had its greatest strength in the Middle West, which had sixty undenominational churches.

[2] See Appendix Tables I and II.

Eighty undenominational churches, or very nearly two-thirds of the number listed, 64.5 per cent., were in villages, sixty-nine of these being in villages with a population of less than 1,000; four were in towns; twenty-seven in hamlets; and thirteen in the open country.[3] In hamlets and small villages were found ninety-six, or 77.4 per cent., of the churches of this type of union.

Statistics [4]

Membership was ascertained for sixty-eight undenominational churches. If this number seems small in comparison with the number used in computing the averages for federated churches, it must be remembered that it constituted a sample of 49 per cent. of all undenominational churches known to exist in the field studied. The total number of members, including non-residents, for these sixty-eight churches was 7,798. It must not be inferred that because this was the membership for half the churches, the total for all undenominational cases in the field studied was twice as great; for, as has been explained, the churches not reported in detail included many small examples of the type. The average membership of the sixty-eight churches was 115. The average number of additions in the year preceding the survey was thirteen, of which nine were received on confession of faith. The average expenditures for local purposes were $2,300, a sum closely parallel to that for federated churches and far in excess of the average church budget, which for the Twenty-five Counties was found to be $913.[5] The per capita contribution toward home expenditures was $18.83, surpassing the average for the Twenty-five Counties, which was $10.60 for every individual in the total membership.

The figures so far presented, however, did not apply to the majority of undenominational churches. These churches,

[3] Concerning thirteen others not enough was known to make it possible to distribute them precisely.

[4] See Appendix Tables IV-XI.

[5] Compiled from figures on page 80 of Morse's *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas* (New York, Doran, 1924).

as has been said, varied greatly in size. Of the sixty-eight for which we have data, nineteen were small churches with a total membership of not over fifty; twenty-one had from fifty to one hundred members; eighteen had from one to two hundred; and the remaining ten were large churches of over two hundred members. The strong churches naturally colored the averages. Statistics were therefore collated separately for churches with a membership of not more than one hundred, into which class fell forty, or well over half the sixty-eight churches; and, on the other hand, for churches of over one hundred members. In preparing the general statistics given above there were included in calculations concerning each point figures for the highest number of churches for which the information was available. In making calculations for the small churches and the large churches separately, however, only those churches were included for which there were available figures for both membership, home expenditures and benevolences. The number of small churches for which this information was available was thirty-one; and the number of large churches was twenty-four.

The small churches had an average total membership of sixty; the large churches, an average total membership of 203. The small churches received in the preceding year an average of six additions; the large churches, an average of twenty-two. Although in the preceding year the proportionate gain of the large churches, which constituted 11 per cent. of the membership of those churches at the end of the year, was not much higher than the 9.5 per cent. gain of the small churches; yet of the small churches fifteen reported having received no new members during the year, while all but four of the large churches gained in membership. For the small churches, the average local expenses were $1,278; for the large churches they were $3,619. The per capita contribution toward local expenditures, however, was for the small churches $21.34; for the large churches only $17.87. It is therefore evident, as was said early in the chapter, that in speaking of undenominational churches we

are concerned with churches not of a standardized type but of great variation as to strength.

The average valuation of the church buildings and parsonages used by the seventy-two undenominational churches for which information on this point was obtained, was $11,885. For at least nine churches, this property was owned at least in part, not by the undenominational church, but by previously existing denominational churches, from which it was borrowed or was hired at a nominal rent. Such denominational churches were in several instances mere vestigial organizations perpetuated chiefly to hold this property. The value of the property used by the individual churches differed greatly. Ten of the seventy-two had no property, holding their services in a schoolhouse, Masonic temple, or other meeting place. Twenty-eight of the seventy-two churches used property valued at $5,000 or less. Forty neither owned parsonages nor had the use of any.

Denominational Origins

The membership of the undenominational churches studied was made up of persons of many different religious connections. Answers to questions as to the denominational origin of members were obtained from forty-nine churches, which gave lists of from two to twenty-four different faiths. The denominations most frequently mentioned were the Methodist Episcopal, specified by all the forty-nine churches; the Baptist, Northern Convention, named by forty-three; the Congregational Church, which was represented in thirty-four; the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., contributing to the membership of thirty-two; the Protestant Episcopal Church, with representatives in twenty-two; the Disciples of Christ, the American Christian Convention and the Church of Christ, grouped together because of the ambiguity of the word "Christian," used by all, and together mentioned twenty-seven times; and the Lutheran Church, mentioned sixteen times. Besides these leading evangelical Protestant denominations, many others were mentioned, making a total

of forty-three different bodies. The list included four kinds of Methodists and four kinds of Presbyterians. Elements of some churches came from denominations frequently referred to as "liberal," among these being the Unitarian and the Universalist denominations. In marked contrast to these groups were such emotional denominations as the Holiness bodies, the Nazarene Church, and the Church of God. Eight churches had members that had formerly been Roman Catholics; and one, a family from the Greek Catholic Church. One included a Mormon; and at least one, a Jew. Another group of faiths sometimes represented consisted of New Thought, Christian Science, Theosophy and Spiritualism.

The number of denominations represented in one church was often large. Twelve churches included representatives of four denominations; seven of five; four of six; and six of seven. Five churches, some of them large and important, included representatives of eight, nine, eleven, twelve and thirteen denominations, respectively. Another church reported from one to twenty members from each of fifteen different origins. Still another church, in a new community to which people had come from all over the United States, included representatives of twenty-four.

In joining many of these undenominational churches, persons belonging to denominational churches were frequently not required to sever their previous connection. Nearly one-third of the sixty-eight churches for which information on this point was available permitted such duplication of membership. Four reported all their members as belonging to denominational churches; and the constitutions of a number of undenominational churches provided that even those who wished to join the church by profession of faith should do so in connection with a church of one of the denominational bodies. Twelve churches, on the other hand, reported that none of their members were also members of denominational churches. The total church-membership for the United States furnished by the *Year Book of the Churches,* includes a considerable proportion of the members of undenominational churches, but not all of them.

Ministers

Of the 137 undenominational churches, ninety-eight, or 71.5 per cent., were ascertained to have had ministers in 1924. One-third of the entire number had resident ministers. Some of the churches for which information was lacking may also have had ministers, resident or non-resident. The proportion known to have had resident ministers was close to the 35.5 per cent. for the 179 counties, but less than half the 72.8 per cent. for federated churches. The proportion of ministers known to be non-resident, 19.7 per cent., on the other hand, was 8.2 points higher than the corresponding figure for federated churches. The average cash salary paid to their ministers by fifty-five undenominational churches for which information was available was $1,350. This was considerably higher than any of the general averages computed by the Institute of Social and Religious Research.[6] It was decidedly lower, however, than the average for federated churches, which, as has been reported, was $1,615.

Benevolences

The undenominational church was charged by its critics with being weak in benevolences; its partisans admitted the accusation to be just. This view was proved to be justified by the statistics. The average annual contribution of the fifty-five undenominational churches for which the figures were available was $265. This fell far below the average for the Twenty-five Counties, which was $399. The annual contribution per member was only $2.17. When the contributions of small churches and of large churches were considered separately, it was found that although the average contribution of the small church was only $131 a year while the average of the large church was $438, yet the average annual per capita contribution of the small churches was $2.18, virtually the same as that for the larger churches, which was $2.16.[7] The proportion of the entire budget de-

[6] See page 50.

[7] These figures are somewhat higher than that for the undenominational church as a whole because the latter was based on cases including some weak churches not giving full data.

voted to benevolences was for small churches 9.3 per cent.; for large churches, 10.8 per cent. A number of undenominational churches reported that they had adopted as the proportion of their total church expenditures to be applied to benevolences the biblical standard for individuals, namely, one-tenth. For denominational churches the average proportion was found in the Twenty-five Counties to be 30.4 per cent. Six small churches reported that they had made no benevolent contribution whatever; and five other small churches, though reporting local expenditures, gave no figures for any benevolences. Thirteen churches contributed small amounts ranging from $6.00 to $50.00, the average being about $25.

Though some undenominational churches contributed to denominational causes, usually to those of more than one denomination if to any at all, they gave more generally to undenominational causes. Contributions were sent by more churches to philanthropic causes than to missions. With a few notable exceptions, the undenominational churches had no well-considered program of benevolences; and apparently, taking them as a whole, they knew very little about the great missionary enterprises of the world. Contributions were made to causes for which sympathy had been aroused by accidental contacts. The reports from the churches bore such testimony as the following: "Collections are taken from time to time for worthy causes"; "Anything which deacons choose"; and "Missions poor." One minister explained this situation as follows:

> There is one drawback to a union church such as this. It has to make its own program without direction from any denominational headquarters and is accountable only to itself. Where a part of the church has no passion for missions and no vision beyond self-support it is more difficult for the pastor and those who have the vision to push a large program through. In the denominational church there is always more or less opposition to the program from headquarters but it is rather easier to combat it when the church knows that Presbytery or Conference is going to call for an accounting and the church be compared to others.

Strength and Weakness

Questioned as to their probable future, twenty-one denominational churches reported the prospects to be favorable. Most used such adjectives as "good" or "fair"; a few went so far as to say "wonderful," "splendid," or "very bright." Eleven additional churches expected to continue undenominational. Others expressed doubt as to their future or mentioned certain difficulties they encountered. Here was evidence, fully supported by statements in letters and by observations in the field, that the undenominational church had at the same time both strong points and weak points.

Among the strong points was the ability to unite discordant elements in small communities in a single church. One of the schedules declared: "One denomination could not support services. Only chance for any church in town." Another reported: "All save for the few who cling most tenaciously to . . . sectarian lines . . . are behind the enterprise." This power to unite diverse elements was further illustrated by the great variety of denominational elements represented in these churches, and by the large number of such elements found combined in each of many undenominational churches.

The undenominational church frequently succeeded also in leading the united people in community service. "All the community agencies," it was reported from one church, "developed after the founding of the church and are in measure due to its unifying the community." The country people of a community where three former denominational churches had united as an undenominational community church, although for many years there had been little contact between village churches and scattered farm families, were coming to welcome the calls of the minister, and to request his services for marriages and funerals; they were glad to have the names of their babies entered upon the cradle roll; and in some cases they even made some contribution to the support of the church. This change was taking place despite the presence in the village of another Protestant church.

The undenominational church, moreover, often proved

successful in rapidly and thoroughly amalgamating various elements in its own membership. In most of the churches of this type surveyed in the field, the spirit of harmony was noteworthy; and in several instances this had been attained in a short time. The good feeling in one church was reported in a letter to have lasted since its origin, eight years previous; and the members of another church were said to "have worked harmoniously together for ten years." The minister of still another undenominational church wrote:

> There is much less dissension here than in any denominational church with which I have ever had anything to do. There are absolutely no cliques nor parties to be served. Christ, not historical leaders, is the head; all follow Him and are brethren.

Again, the undenominational church showed itself able to enlist in church work and church support and often to bring into membership, business men and others who had not previously been connected with any church. The statement was once published about such a church that it was being "run by the sinners." The keen minds and business acumen of such recruits greatly assisted many undenominational churches. Churches of this type, moreover, when carrying out a vigorous program, often attracted radical and energetic young people.

Since undenominational churches were almost always organized without assistance from experienced religious leaders, they were influenced by a minimum of denominational tradition, and therefore they made experiments in forms of organization and in methods of work. To this, witness is borne by these words from a minister's letter:

> The spirit of adventure is fine. We are not bound to tradition and historical practices and organizations. We eliminate or add organizations as the needs of the people seem to demand. The spiritual need of the people is the law under Christ for organization and activity.

The separation from denominational connections that gave the undenominational church the strong characteristics just described, also resulted, according to the testimony of leaders

of some of the churches themselves, in certain points of weakness. In the first place, a considerable number reported difficulty in finding suitable ministers. Until 1924 there was no agency to fill this need; and although in that year one was started, it could not at once render generally effective service. The leaders of some undenominational churches expressed the conviction that denominational boards, when appealed to, had failed to send them their best men. Confronted with this difficulty, churches sometimes took ministers insufficiently accredited, who sometimes proved ill-trained and even did serious harm. One minister, previously a jeweler, who had little education and no tact, occasioned dissension that put a stop to church activities. Another, popular at first as a speaker, proved to be so idle and frivolous that he estranged many from the church. Still another, not an ordained minister, while acting as supply, made himself popular through musical and social activities; but when the people wished to ordain him, they learned that he had a bad moral record elsewhere; and in place of the enthusiastic teamwork of the first years of the church he left behind him division and disillusionment. Still another, a few months after combining three former churches as an undenominational church, became personally discredited; and the church did not survive his fall. Though denominational churches are occasionally unfortunate in their ministers, their overhead agencies afford them comparative protection. It is no wonder that five schedules of undenominational churches contained the statement that upon getting a good minister depended their hope of success.

The undenominational church, in the second place, had suffered from the lack of expert advice in regard to methods of work. Peculiar gifts and expert knowledge that the ordinary layman does not possess are required in those who are successfully to conduct a church. The lesson helps, stewardship leaflets, mission-study plans, outlines for financial campaigns, and the like, that are systematically brought to the attention of denominational churches, were generally lacking to workers in churches not connected with an overhead organization. The excellent interdenominational publi-

cations now available were frequently unfamiliar to the lay leaders and even to the ministers. Upon the traditions and amount of knowledge of local leaders it largely depended whether or not the undenominational church had a modern program; and in practice, though among the churches surveyed approved methods were successfully applied by nearly half, the program of other churches was extremely primitive, sometimes being confined to preaching services and a little old-fashioned Sunday school. In all these things the undenominational churches, with some exceptions, felt their lack of the guidance and stimulus of denominational superintendents. An office similar to that of the denominational superintendent was filled in Massachusetts by the representative of the state federation of churches; but most such agencies used their influence against this type of church.

A third point of weakness has already been made clear, namely, the low achievement of the undenominational church in benevolences.

The undenominational church, in the fourth place, was found to be usually unable to obtain home-mission aid during the period of immaturity and later in emergencies; although in a few exceptional cases such aid was granted by the agencies of at least two denominational bodies. That this drawback was serious was proved by the fact that some undenominational churches allied themselves with an overhead body partly for the purpose of qualifying themselves to receive home-mission grants.

Again, where the undenominational church did not succeed in enlisting all the denominational elements of the community, it often aroused in the remaining denominational church or churches intense antagonism, which it sometimes returned in kind.

The undenominational church, moreover, was found peculiarly open to the danger of being annexed by extremely sectarian leadership. An illustration of this occurred in the experience of an undenominational church organized by a student preacher from a denominational seminary. A letter from this young man contains these words:

> Our basis of union was the Bible, especially the New Testament. . . . We called ourselves a Church of Christ, because there is no other name authorized for the assembly. Our baptism was immersion because of New Testament teaching and because all denominations recognize it as a form of baptism.

This church, though not connected with any denominational body, was yet far from having the inclusiveness and the tolerant spirit characteristic of united churches. A theological student of another denomination divided a small community between a small undenominational church and a small organization of his own faith. Undenominational churches sometimes fell under the influence of such emotional sects as the Nazarenes or the so-called "Holy Rollers." Or, again, the usurping group represented not a standard denomination but an intensely Fundamentalist position. The constitution of a Fundamentalist undenominational church had the following articles:

> Those finding themselves at any time at variance with the teachings, life and rules of the church agree to ask for their letters and quietly withdraw from the church.

Although, as has been shown, the large secular element in the local leadership of undenominational churches had some good effects, it had also one great disadvantage. This element tended to think of the church as a social rather than as a religious agency. Those forming this element emphasized the functions of the church as to moral leadership, ethical education, and social intercourse; and they frequently promoted the church as an advertisement to the community likely to draw a good class of new residents. Various effects of this secular influence were experienced by certain churches surveyed. One church built first of all a very large and costly community house that it would probably take many years to pay for; and meanwhile church services were to be held in the auditorium of the community house, which though well adapted to amateur plays and moving-picture shows, was without an atmosphere conducive to a spirit of worship. The constitution of another church, though making arrangements for business affairs, made no

provision either for baptism or for communion. During the first pastorate there were no admissions by confession, and there was no communion service. The second minister, a non-resident, having announced communion for a certain Sunday, found when preparing to administer the rite, that there were no deacons or elders to assist him. The first minister of still another such church resigned immediately after an unsuccessful campaign against recognized evils that for business reasons the secular church leaders preferred should not be remedied.

The last and most important point of weakness of the undenominational church—one that includes many of those already explained—is the lack of any regular agency bringing stimulus from without. This lack was forcibly expressed by the minister of such a church in these words:

> If a church is going to become a real center of Christian activity it needs something more of a stimulus to endeavor than can be found in the mere normal incentive to activity inherent in the personal inclinations of the individuals composing the group. Like every other human organization, we need an ideal and program, always a little beyond us, toward which we bend our strenuous efforts.

Tendencies

On the whole, the difficulties inherent in the undenominational church, from the very fact that it stands apart from any denominational body, have been found to be so great that it is not surprising that undenominational churches did not all function long as such. Many—more than can be counted in the absence of published data—fell into inactivity. Inquiries sent to reported cases brought such replies as these: "It has simply died. Our first pastor proved to be a failure." "There are so few members left the church is nearly dead." "No church for four years."

Other undenominational churches connected themselves with one or another denomination. At least thirty-one such churches are included in the list of denominational united churches prepared during this study. Of these churches nineteen became Congregational; six, Presbyterian; five,

Methodist; and one, Baptist. Some of these accepted a denominational program in its entirety; others affiliated themselves with the denominational body only loosely and for certain specified purposes. Such a transition was being undergone during the progress of the study by at least three additional churches. The number that had become denominational churches of the ordinary type cannot be ascertained. In spite of the fact that union churches have been coming into existence for a number of years, there were in 1924, so far as dates of origin could be learned, only twenty-one that were more than ten years old.

In communities with a religious leadership that was unusually strong and sustained, undenominational churches had flourished for many years. One of the oldest was in a village where peculiar occupational conditions had gathered many college men and women of high character with previous experience in religious work. This church bore comparison with any other, whether undenominational or denominational. In similar unusual surroundings other undenominational churches found favorable conditions. Elsewhere the most important function of this type of union, so far as could be judged by the testimony of these churches themselves, was to unite local religious groups too small to act independently and which were unwilling to join forces, at least in the beginning, under any one denominational body.

Chapter IV

THE DENOMINATIONAL UNITED CHURCH

The term "denominational united church" as used in this book signifies a church, connected with a single denominational body, that has definitely undertaken or had allocated to it responsibility for the religious needs of a public not confined to one denominational group, and that includes in its membership—whether regular or associate—elements of different denominational origins. Members received from other than the official denomination are not required to surrender creed, form of baptism, or denominational loyalty, denominational united churches being easily distinguished in this way from the numerous denominational churches of the traditional kind that have received a large proportion of their members by letter from churches of other denominations. If, for example, a Baptist church required immersion as a condition of membership, it was not held in this study to be a united church; but it was held to be a united church, if, on the contrary, it received either into full membership or into associate membership Christians of other denominations without requiring them to be immersed. Denominational united churches included, for the purposes of this book, the following:

(1) Churches to which had been allocated through interdenominational agreement the responsibility for certain fields, and which were fulfilling the duties involved.

(2) Churches that on their own initiative had formally assumed responsibility for certain fields, provided they had actually received into membership persons of other denominations without requiring the surrender of denominational marks.

No church was included in either of these two classes that was in a community having another church of any one of the denominations classed in this book as of the pre-

dominant type[1] unless there was evidence that it was actually fulfilling the conditions just discussed, or unless it had arisen through consolidation.

(3) Consolidated churches. A "consolidated church," as the term is used in this book, is a church formed through the amalgamation of two or more denominational churches, but which is under a single denominational body. If it is under the same denomination as was one of the amalgamating churches, it is said that the other original church or churches were merged with this one.

The kinds of evidence upon which the conclusions presented in this chapter were based were as follows: mail schedules received from 145 churches, often accompanied by letters, clippings or other illustrative material; information obtained through correspondence with denominational superintendents in thirty states, and through interviews with such officials in twenty-four states, this kind of information being especially valuable with respect to the denominational type of united churches; surveys by investigators of the Institute of Social and Religious Research of twenty-three denominational united churches; and statistical data derived from denominational annual reports for 383 churches of this type.[2]

The 383 churches for which data were included in the statistics constituted a sample of nearly three-fourths, 72.5 per cent., of all the denominational united churches listed. Those not included in the statistics fell into three classes: first, churches belonging to denominations not publishing statistics, or for which the annuals required were not accessible; secondly, churches forming parts of circuits for which statistics were returned as a whole, such churches usually not being strong; and, finally, churches not returning to denominational statisticians complete figures, usually on account of inactivity. Since the churches represented in the statistics, though including some small churches, included

[1] In case of immersionist churches, competition would naturally be with another immersionist church. For a discussion of other churches in communities with united churches, see Chapter XIV.

[2] See Appendix, Tables IV-XI. In these tables affiliated churches are included.

also many large and strong organizations, while most of the churches omitted fell below the average in size and strength, the statistics given for this type do it more than justice.

How They Arose

Denominational united churches developed in several different ways according to the conditions of their environment.

WHERE THERE WAS NO CHURCH

Some of those studied arose in new communities, such as pioneer settlements of the Mountain area or of the far West; recently irrigated districts; cut-over sections where land was being reclaimed for agriculture; or mining towns or lumber camps, especially those owned by individuals or companies willing to help support a church. Not only are there few people in such places, but among these few are members and adherents of many different denominations, and others who are without religious traditions of any kind. A small number, perhaps, feeling that their need of a minister was "desperate," got together and organized a church, the choice of denominational connection being a matter of minor importance. They sometimes selected a denomination because it was not one of those preferred by the larger rival groups, or because fewer people considered it undesirable. Several Congregational churches, for instance, were found to have included among the original members not a single "trained" Congregationalist; and a similar situation existed for a considerable number of Presbyterian and of Methodist churches.

There was a time when churches were started in many new communities by agents of denominational home-missionary boards; and when in many other places churches organized through local initiative were fostered by home-missionary funds. In recent years churches uniting all elements usually developed best when a state federation of churches or home-missions council, after allocating the field or accept-

ing a local choice, used its influence to prevent churches of other denominations from coming in.

WHERE THERE WAS ONE CHURCH

A denominational community church often arose where a church once strictly denominational, but alone in its field, broadened its program and welcomed into membership persons of other denominations. The leader in such a movement was often a new minister. Sometimes he was a denominational official. One Methodist Episcopal district superintendent said in an interview that in such situations he was accustomed to call the people together and to explain what a community church might do for them, and then to put on the advisory board of the local church a good number of men who were not Methodists. In this matter he confessed that he sometimes "smashed the discipline." On the board of one church he put two Presbyterians, two Congregationalists, three Baptists, two Christians and two Episcopalians. All but two of these men later became members of the local Methodist church. Half the churches in this superintendent's district had in 1924 a considerable proportion of members formerly of other denominations. Again, a church alone in its community was sometimes chosen by a denominational board as a demonstration parish, and was enabled to put on a community program through home-mission funds and special oversight.

WHERE THERE WERE TWO OR MORE CHURCHES

Besides the denominational community churches in unchurched or inadequately churched communities, many were in villages that had more churches than the people felt able to support. In some of these villages there had been a decline of population, or at least, through shifting of population, a decrease in the number of persons disposed to contribute to the support of the existing Protestant churches. In other communities the people had originally organized their churches with the idea that their villages were destined

to become great cities. The change of attitude was frequently caused at least in part by a desire to obtain a better minister, or to conduct more effective church work. It was often hastened by the hard times of the farmer.

No matter how it happened that so many churches were started, a time came when the people no longer felt able to support them all. Such changes in conditions have been shown in previous chapters to have contributed to the organization of federated and of undenominational churches. The same factors have also resulted in the formation of at least 106 consolidated churches. In not fewer than twenty-four of these instances, one or more of the churches consolidating had previously been inactive. The denominations of the churches that consolidated were the same as those represented by the units of federated churches,[3] although the proportion of immersionist churches was smaller. Churches of the various denominational types, moreover, were united in similar combinations: fifty-five consolidations involved churches of the predominant type only, and thirty-two consolidations were composed of churches of the predominant type in combination with immersionist churches. Consolidations of two immersionist units were extremely rare; very few included a church of any liturgical denomination. Seventy-six of the resulting consolidated churches belonged to one of the denominations represented; and twenty-two were known to be of a denomination different from that of either of the original churches, the reported reason for the choice in each case being to make it unnecessary for one church to sacrifice more than the other. Of the 106 consolidations, twenty-two had been formed after experience of coöperation as federated churches. The consolidated churches were distributed among denominations as follows: Congregational, forty-one; Presbyterian, thirty-three; Methodist, twenty-four; Baptist, five; scattering, three.

Many united churches of the denominational type drew some of their members from inactive or abandoned churches in the neighborhood.

[3] See page 39.

When They Arose

The organization, in new communities or in other communities without churches, of denominational organizations containing members of diverse previous affiliations had been going on quietly for a quarter of a century or longer. For united churches of this kind it was impossible to obtain statistics concerning dates of organization. For the consolidated churches, dates of union could be inferred from facts provided by denominational annual statistics.

Among surviving cases of consolidation only three were formed before 1900, and only fourteen before the beginning of 1910. The next five years saw the rise of ten, and the five years following—that is, the years 1915 through 1919—of twenty-six. During the next five years, 1920 through 1924, there came into existence fifty-six consolidations, more than had been organized in the preceding ten years. This change in rapidity of consolidation followed quickly after the formation of the Interchurch World Movement and the rapid spread of home-missions councils. These latter organizations, especially through allocation of territory, also stimulated the broadening of denominational churches so as to serve and to draw into membership all religious elements in their communities. Like consolidated churches, therefore, the united churches evolved from narrowly denominational churches were in great measure of recent development.

Number and Distribution

The number of denominational united churches listed by the present study was 528,[4] considerably more than were included among federated churches and undenominational churches together. This total, moreover, did not include all examples of this form of union. Since examples of this type were not so easily identified as churches of other types, it would have been necessary to have full information from every denominational superintendent in the field studied; and

[4] This total and all other figures for denominational united churches include affiliated churches.

this was manifestly out of the question. It was proved, however, that not fewer than 528 denominational united churches existed in town and country area of the northern and western parts of the United States; and this number included most of the stronger churches of this type.

The denominational united church had fewest representatives in the Northern Colonial area; because, competing churches having been established there in early days, the federated church proved the most practicable form of union, and as such was fostered by denominational officials and interdenominational agencies. In this area were found only eighty-seven cases of the denominational type, corresponding to about one-sixth, 16.5 per cent., of the whole number of united churches. In the Middle West there were found 186 churches of this type, corresponding to rather more than one-third, 35.2 per cent. of the whole number. In this area many denominational superintendents, distrusting the federated church, had thrown their influence toward the consolidation of competing churches under denominational bodies. In the newer sections of the country, the Mountain area and the Pacific region, were found nearly half the cases listed, namely, 255 cases, or 48.3 per cent. The late origin of so many communities in these areas, the allocation of territory through interdenominational agreement, and the fact that state home-missions councils had exerted their influence in favor of the denominational united church—all these factors had promoted the development of churches of this type of union. In these two areas the number of federated and undenominational churches together was only seventy-four; so that the number of denominational united churches in that part of the United States was nearly three and a half times as great as that of the other two types put together.

In the whole field there were found in the towns only sixteen denominational united churches, or 3.1 per cent. of the total number. In large villages of 1,750 to 2,500 inhabitants there were only twenty-one denominational united churches; and in medium-sized villages of between 1,000 and 1,750 inhabitants, only fifty-one; while in small villages of under 1,000 inhabitants, there were 225 such churches, or 43.7 per

cent. of the entire number. In hamlets there were 144, well over a quarter of the number, 27.9 per cent.; and in the open country, fifty-eight cases, 11.3 per cent. Of the entire number of denominational united churches, therefore, nearly five-sixths, 82.9 per cent., were in places where the population of the center was under one thousand. The denominational united church proved to be a phenomenon of hamlets and of the open country to a considerably greater extent than either the federated church or the undenominational church. In the open country the federated and the undenominational church had only twenty-five examples between them, while the denominational united church had fifty-eight. To put it differently, 69.9 per cent. of the cases of union in the open country were denominational united churches, the other 30.1 per cent. being divided between the other types. In hamlets there were ninety cases of union divided between the federated and undenominational types, to 144 cases of the denominational type. In small villages the number of denominational united churches listed was exactly the same as the number of the other two types put together. Moreover, since the enumeration of the denominational type was less complete than that of the other two types, the actual preponderance of the denominational type over the others was probably even greater than this.

Among the reasons for this preponderance were the following: in the first place, small places were less likely than larger centers to have had competing churches in earlier years. Among new communities, moreover, it was more difficult for interdenominational agencies to guarantee the exclusive occupation of the larger places by a single church, as it was also harder for such a church in a larger center to maintain its hold upon all elements of the population. The fact that denominational united churches were to so great an extent in small places may be expected to modify the statistics for this type, making the memberships smaller and the budgets lower.

The distribution by denominations of the known churches of this type of union was approximately as follows: Congregational, 205 churches; Presbyterian in the U.S.A., 142

churches; Methodist Episcopal, 124; and Baptist Northern Convention, thirty-seven. The remaining twenty churches were distributed among nine different denominations, each represented either by one church or by a very few churches. The figures probably did not give the whole number of united churches of denominations that had very few; as it was impossible to interview every denominational superintendent of these denominations. To list the Methodist cases completely, moreover, was rendered impracticable by the fact that the district superintendents of that denomination are widely scattered.

Membership

There were enrolled in the 383 denominational united churches included in the statistics, a total membership of 40,039. Although this total represented somewhat less than three-fourths of the total number of churches listed, the fact that the churches not included were to a great extent comparatively small, prevents a proportional estimate of the total. Even the total enrollment of all the churches listed, if this could have been obtained, would have omitted members of undiscovered churches of this type.

The average total membership for the field as a whole was 105. The average membership for the village churches of the 179 Counties was 108; and that of the country churches was seventy-two. Now of the denominational united churches, about two-fifths were situated either in the open country or in hamlets; while only a comparatively small proportion were in large villages and towns. The fact that the average membership of such churches, namely, 105, approximated so closely the average for village churches instead of falling between the averages for country and village churches in the 179 Counties, indicates that denominational united churches, enlisting as they did members of denominations other than the one officially represented, were unusually large for their environments. Comparison of the figures for the different areas showed close parallelism between the averages for village churches in the 179 Counties and for

denominational united churches, the average membership for the latter being a little lower than the average for the churches of the 179 Counties, except in the Mountain area, where it was perceptibly higher. The average membership of the Methodist united churches, so far as data were available, was 142; of the Congregational churches, 101; of the Presbyterian, 90; and of the Baptist, 74.

The number of additions reported for the preceding year for the 383 churches studied statistically was 4,332; and because not all the denominations concerned gave full information on this point, the figure was less than it should have been. The number constituted over one-tenth, 10.8 per cent., of the total membership at the end of the year. The corresponding ratio for the 140 Villages was 8.9 per cent., according to unpublished data. The average number of additions per united church was 11.3. Of these additions an average of 6.4, or rather more than half, was received on confession of faith.

Members were received by letter into denominational united churches from churches connected with any Protestant body. Those entering these churches by profession of faith were frequently baptized by whatever form the candidate preferred; and not a few churches nominally not practicing immersion had installed in their church buildings baptistries for the service of those who preferred immersion.

In determining tests to be applied to candidates for membership, these churches tried in various ways to get down to the essential beliefs held in common by all Christians. Some churches either had borrowed or had originated a creed or a covenant which seemed to them to express the essential truths of Christianity. Others required a general profession of belief in "the Christian faith," leaving it to the individual to determine in what the "Christian faith" consisted. Still other churches required only a confession of faith in Christ, or of a desire to follow Him.

DENOMINATIONAL ORIGINS

Concerning denominational origins represented in the membership, information was available for 108 churches.

The bodies contributing members to the greatest number of churches were: Methodist Episcopal, represented in forty-three churches; Baptist, in thirty-six; Lutheran, in twenty-eight; Presbyterian, in twenty-four; and Congregational, in twenty-three. Many other denominations were represented in such churches, the total number of different faiths included in the lists being thirty-one. Among these were certain faiths not usually represented in Protestant churches, such as those of the Roman Catholic Church, Mormonism, Christian Science, the Mennonite bodies and the persuasion called "Millennial Dawn." From two to four denominations were included in each of fifty-three of the churches analyzed; that is, in a little more than half. The number represented in each of the other forty-seven churches varied from five to twenty. Nineteen churches included representatives of five denominations; eleven, of six denominations; from two to five churches each drew members from seven, eight, nine, and ten denominations respectively; and three churches included representatives of fourteen, seventeen and twenty communions respectively. The average number of elements for all the 100 churches was four and three-quarters. One schedule reported, "Our additions this year have included people of four different nationalities and six different denominations." Another church was formed of people of eleven different denominations, the four elders coming from four different faiths. New members received into another church on a single Sunday represented eight different communions.

Of the churches composed of four or more denominational elements, twenty-five were Presbyterian; twenty-four, Congregational; ten, Methodist; five, Baptist; one, Church of Christ; and one, United Brethren. The average number of faiths associated in one church was for the Methodist churches, 5.3; for the Baptist churches, 5.4; for the Congregational churches, 5.8; and for the Presbyterian churches, the comparatively high figure of 7.4.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Some churches received those coming to them from other denominations into "associate" or "affiliated" membership. This practice was sometimes adopted because the church wished to safeguard certain beliefs or practices or property, as did a considerable number of Baptist community churches. By other churches this form of membership had been adopted to draw into membership local groups having strong denominational loyalties, which it was desired they should not be obliged to surrender. Such a roll was also found in use in certain communities with a large transient population, as for instance in several college towns. A church in one such environment had eighty-five associate members. The associate members of this last kind continued to hold membership in their home churches, and automatically ceased to be associate members on leaving the community. In contrast to the three situations just enumerated, in all of which associate members were professing Christians, some churches had an associate roll comparable to the old "society" of New England Congregationalism; that is, they enrolled as associate members persons of good moral character that helped to support the church. The "society," however, had been adapted by Baptist churches of one of the Pacific states to include professed Christians that had not been immersed. Some churches, especially Baptist churches, restricted the voting powers of associate members; others received them on terms of complete equality. A certain church giving associate members equal privileges with denominational members had 180 associate members to 156 regular members.

Among 114 denominational united churches about which it was learned whether they received persons of other denominations into associate or into full membership, those with associate membership numbered only twenty. Besides the college-town church to which reference has been made, only one had an enrollment upon such a list of over twenty; and eight churches had not more than five associate members each. One church that had twenty-nine such members

in the beginning had when surveyed but two, most of the original associate members having moved away and additions having been received only into full membership. Another church that stood ready to receive associate members found that all persons uniting were willing to come into full membership. A number of other churches reported finding no need for such an arrangement.

Far more common than associate membership was the reception of persons from other denominations as regular members on full equality with those originally belonging to the denomination in question. This plan prevailed in ninety-four churches of this type. About five-sixths, 82.5 per cent., therefore, of the churches for which information on this point was collected, received members of their own and of other denominations into one general roll. A number even of Baptist churches received people from other denominations to full membership, giving unrestricted voting powers.

Local Expenditures

The average local expenditure of 383 denominational united churches was $2,396. For the Twenty-five Counties the average sum annually devoted by town and country churches to local expenses was $913.[5] In expenditure upon its local program, therefore, including maintenance of property, coal, janitor service, salary of minister and similar kinds of outlay, the denominational united churches outdid strictly denominational churches, expending well over twice as much; and this in spite of the fact that a large proportion of denominational united churches were in small places. The annual per capita contribution for local purposes, moreover, was $22.92, which also greatly exceeded the corresponding figure for the Twenty-five Counties, which was $10.60.[6] Here again the average for the denominational united churches was almost twice as great as that for ordinary churches.

[5] Computed from data in Morse's *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas* (New York, Doran, 1924), p. 80.

[6] The figure on p. 80 of *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas* is based on resident membership.

This difference is partly explained by the fact that investigation of the subscription lists of eight denominational united churches showed that nearly a third of the subscribers, 32.0 per cent., were non-members; and that of the total amount contributed well over one-fifth, 22.6 per cent., was subscribed by non-members. The denominational united churches made a much more effective appeal to persons who were not church-members than did competing churches. The part of the local budget received from non-members, however, was far from explaining completely the fact that the average home expenditure was more than double that of the average for the churches in the Twenty-five Counties.

The average cash salary paid their ministers by 247 denominational united churches was $1,349. The average salary received by ministers in the Twenty-five Counties was $1,030. This figure, however, is not comparable with that for denominational united churches for two reasons: in calculating it, an allowance of $250 was made for every minister receiving the free use of a parsonage. And also the figure is for the average amount received by ministers, often from two or more churches; while the average salary just given as that for denominational united churches was paid by individual churches. The average expenditure in salary per church[7] was only $539 for the Twenty-five Counties. The average denominational united church, therefore, paid between two and three times as much in cash salary as did the denominational churches of the traditional kind. Of the amount in excess of the town and country average, applied by denominational united churches to local expenditures, therefore, a considerable part was devoted to paying a higher salary to their ministers.

This comparatively high salary enabled a large proportion of these churches to obtain a resident minister. For 179 typical counties studied by the Institute, the proportion of churches with resident ministers was not much more than one-third, 35.5 per cent., but for denominational united churches, the proportion definitely ascertained to have resi-

[7] Computed by applying to the average total expenditure of these 1,046 churches the proportion of this total that they devoted to salary.

dent ministers in 1923-24 was about three-fifths, 58.9 per cent. This proportion was fifteen points less than that for the 140 Villages, which were considerably larger than the communities in which most of the denominational united churches were found. The proportion of denominational united churches having non-resident ministers was correspondingly low. For the churches of the 179 Counties, the proportion of churches with non-resident ministers was over one-half, 52.6 per cent.; for denominational united churches, on the contrary, it could not have been higher than 28.8 per cent.

Besides paying comparatively high salaries, denominational united churches in general made a large outlay in two other directions. Many of them had a higher standard of comfort and beauty than the average church in communities comparable in size, and therefore spent more money on music, decorations, cushions, and the like. Others had a strong purpose to serve their communities, frequently, for example, keeping the church building warm throughout the week as the scene of various helpful community activities.

Benevolences

Denominational united churches applied to benevolences a comparatively small proportion of their total expenditures. The proportion prevailing in the Twenty-five Counties was 30.4 per cent. Denominational united churches contributed to causes outside the community a proportion just about half as high, namely, 14.8 per cent.

The per capita contribution to benevolences of united churches of this type was also low in comparison with that of town and country churches of the Twenty-five Counties. For that field the ratio of church benevolences to total membership was $4.91.[8] For the denominational united churches of the field as a whole, it was only $3.98. For the Northern Colonial area it was $4.93, thus approaching the average for the Twenty-five Counties; and for the Pacific coast it was considerably higher, being $6.19.

[8] Computed from the figure for resident membership on page 80 of *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.*

In spite of their low per cent. of benevolences in total expenditures, and their low per capita benevolences, denominational united churches made to benevolences an annual contribution per church that was slightly above the average for town and country churches. This average, in the Twenty-five Counties, was $399; while that for the denominational united churches was $417. The apparent inconsistency is explained by the comparatively large membership of these churches. Their average membership, as was shown earlier in this chapter, was close to that of village churches. Their benevolences per church, however, were considerably below the average for the village churches of the Twenty-five Counties, which was $507.[9]

In judging the benevolences of denominational united churches, however, it is only fair to take into consideration two facts. First, as has been said, many of these churches maintain a program of community service entailing expenses not usually incurred by strictly denominational churches. Therefore items of outlay included under local expenditures might well be classed under benevolences. Again, denominational figures for benevolences, upon which the averages for denominational united churches were based, did not for most denominations include contributions of a given church either to the agencies of denominations other than its own, or to interdenominational, undenominational or philanthropic causes. Yet to objects of one or more of these kinds many denominational united churches made contributions. Some of them, indeed, regularly offered to transmit individual contributions to agencies of any denomination designated by the giver. From a certain church, contributions were sent to the boards of five different denominations.

Ministers and lay leaders of some denominational united churches, and of some federated churches as well, testified to a difficulty in raising the standard of church expenditure —especially for benevolences but to some extent for home expenditures also—to a level they considered worthy of the

[9] Computed from figures on page 80 of *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.*

new and larger enterprise. Consolidated churches tended more frequently than federated churches to let the standard for their combined activities remain at the level formerly maintained by the separate denominational churches. Federated churches had more to remind them of their change of status; and the presence in a federated church of distinct denominational elements sometimes introduced the stimulus of competition, especially in regard to benevolences.

Tendencies

Few churches that had united as consolidated churches afterwards resumed separate existence. This situation was in striking contrast to that regarding federated churches. Denominational leaders pointed out three reasons for the difference. In the first place, people did not give up their own denomination altogether to adopt another denomination unless they had a low degree of denominational spirit and a sense of local unity. Secondly, the transfer of church property constituted part of the formal arrangements between denominational bodies in such crises. Without divided property interests there was less to occasion a rupture; and any impulse to separate would naturally be checked by the difficulties involved in redistributing the property. Finally, a strong stabilizing influence was exerted by overhead leadership.

With nothing to remind them of the previous state of separation, with common interests and joint activities to bind them together, and with denominational conferences, representatives, institutions and history to rouse their enthusiastic loyalty, the people of many consolidated churches became homogeneous wholes with considerable ease and rapidity. State Sunday-school secretaries familiar with churches through many visits, and denominational superintendents that had come to the field after the date of union, were surprised to learn that certain consolidated churches had ever been other than churches of the one denomination. People brought up on the Westminster catechism learned to say that "Methodists they would die." Thus a denominational

united church sometimes reverted to a denominational church of the traditional kind. This had sometimes happened without denominational aggression on the part either of laymen, of ministers, or of overhead officials; in a few cases, however, it was ascribed to such aggression, which was believed locally to have been instigated by denominational superintendents. The churches in which such a transformation was evidenced were for the most part among the earlier instances of consolidation; most consolidated churches were in 1924 too young for it to be clear how they would develop. A large proportion were acting in good faith and to the general satisfaction as the churches of all the religious elements of their respective communities.

If certain early denominational united churches had become strictly denominational, others had developed in the opposite direction. A few had thrown off all denominational ties to become undenominational churches. At least thirty-seven others claimed independence in local church government, while retaining for certain purposes a loose relationship with their denominational bodies. The latter kind of united churches will form the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter V

THE AFFILIATED CHURCH

The three types of united churches so far considered: the undenominational church connected with no denominational body, the denominational united church connected with one denominational body, and the federated church connected with two or more denominational bodies, would seem at first thought to divide the logical possibilities in a comprehensive way. But there has recently developed what seems to be a fourth type, a church related to a denominational body for certain specified purposes, but independent of it in all other respects.

Early in the present investigation a denominational superintendent spoke of a certain church as "not a Congregational church." As it was listed in the *Congregational Year-Book,* obtained its ministers through the Congregational state conference, and sent its benevolences to Congregational boards, the statement was puzzling. The superintendent explained that this church had been organized as a union church and still treasured its independence. "If you called them Congregational," he added, "there would be a riot." The attention of the investigators was also drawn to other churches of this kind. In a village of the Middle West surveyed in the course of the American Village Study, for example, the minutes of a church that had originated as a union church recorded a vote to "enter the fellowship of the Congregational Church," but without becoming "denominational."

The independence of all local churches under Congregational polity made a loose affiliation with that denomination particularly easy; but it was soon found that such churches were connected with several other denominations. A Presbyterian synodical superintendent, in response to a request

for information concerning the denominational united churches under his charge, described certain ones as "strictly undenominational in functioning but under the control of the Presbyterian Church." A letter enclosed with a mail schedule sent out in connection with the present study included this statement:

> The church was first organized as a Methodist Episcopal church. Later, in 1920 and 1921, it became a community organization, although still connected with the Methodist Church both as to the supply of pastors and the use of benevolence contributions.

An announcement printed for local distribution, sent with another schedule, contained the following statements:

> That . . . in order to serve the needs of the whole community, no distinction should be given to any one creed, ceremony or denomination. . . . That this church shall retain the voting membership of the denomination from which the church came, in order to get the inspiration of a great organization, the uplift and instruction from its conventions and the advice of its experts in church methods. . . . That . . . mission fields should be chosen from the denomination allowing this church fellowship and formerly represented by the Free Baptist Church which was generous enough to offer its property.

These few examples, typical of many, represented all four of the denominations most commonly represented among united churches. The distribution by denominations, so far as these churches could be identified, was as follows: Congregational, nineteen; Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., nine; Methodist Episcopal, five; Baptist, Northern Convention, two; Christian, one; United Brethren, one.

Churches of this type were found in sixteen different states scattered through the North and the West. Eight of these churches were in the Northern Colonial area, eleven in the Middle West, nine in the Mountain area, and ten in the states along the Pacific coast, making a total of thirty-seven.

The list was probably far from complete. Many churches classified as of the denominational type of union used titles suggesting the possibility that instead of being considered strictly denominational they should be classified as affili-

ated. Such titles were "Forwardtown Community Church," "Community Methodist Church," "Presbyterian Community Church," and "Community Church (Methodist Affiliation)." But titles like these were sometimes used by churches conducted along strictly denominational lines. No church, therefore, was listed as affiliated unless the classification was supported by other evidence than that afforded by a title.

To identify cases of this type, given sufficient information, was easy if the affiliation was with the Methodist or with the Presbyterian bodies. The question was decided by two facts: that the form of local church government was not the standard form for the denomination, and that the seat of authority was the local church. If the affiliation was with a denomination of congregational polity the matter was more difficult; but local people and denominational superintendents usually agreed as to which churches should be classed as affiliated.

Though in each case both local church leaders and denominational superintendents regarded the church in question as markedly different from the strictly denominational churches, they were not aware of the wide distribution of similar churches and were therefore inclined to look upon each as an exception rather than as an example of a distinct type. The comprehensive view made possible by this study, however, seemed to justify the classification of these churches separately from denominational united churches.

The expressions usually employed both by the leaders of such churches and by denominational superintendents, to characterize the relation between the church and the denominational body, were "affiliation," "fellowship" and "supervision." As the word "affiliation" was employed more generally than the others, especially in the titles of the churches, it was adopted for use in this book.

The term "affiliated church," as here employed, signifies a church that in freedom to form its own constitution and control its own local affairs resembles the undenominational church, but that is connected with a denominational body for certain specific purposes, usually including ministerial supply and distribution of benevolences. Persons from other

denominations are received to full membership with equal voting powers.

For statistical purposes the churches of this type were included among denominational churches, just as they are included in the statistics published by denominations. Thirty-seven churches would not have formed a sufficiently large statistical sample, especially as they differed greatly in size and characteristics, were scattered all over the field, and were found in a variety of environments. Moreover, lack of information about many churches made it impossible to isolate all such cases, so that statistics for denominational united churches would in any case have included some affiliated churches.

Origin

Affiliation has been exemplified in scattered instances for many years. As early as 1848 a certain Baptist church, so it was reported in a mail schedule, "decided to run on a community basis, and under the Methodist Conference supply and supervision." Most of the examples known to exist in 1924, however, originated very recently. Only six in the list prepared by this study were formed before 1914, all of these being Congregational; and more than half the total number came into existence after the beginning of 1920.

Those formerly undenominational

Affiliated churches originated in several different ways. Fifteen of the thirty-seven listed were originally undenominational churches. A number of these accepted denominational supervision because of difficulty in obtaining ministers. The members of an undenominational church in the Middle West, a combination of three former denominational churches, finding themselves unable, during an experience of several years, to obtain ministers except "outcasts of denominations," as their schedule expressed it, discussed the question of alliance with the regional officials of each of the

denominations represented, and finally decided to connect themselves with the Methodist Conference.

The reason why certain other undenominational churches affiliated with a denomination is given in the following quotation:

> Our church tried the experiment of a "community church" for one year. They were not able to raise sufficient funds for the minister's salary. They later called a meeting and after much thought decided to affiliate with the Presbyterian Church in order to have the financial aid of a big denomination.

That the desire for home-mission aid was frequently one of the important motives was indicated as probable by the fact that nine of the thirty-seven churches listed were receiving home-mission aid in 1923-24, while another which was not aided that year had, however, received aid after affiliation. Ten churches out of thirty-seven is more than one in four, a proportion decidedly higher than that prevailing in the Twenty-five Counties, which was found to be one in five.[1]

Another occasional motive for affiliation was the desire to be protected by a state interdenominational organization from the invasion of the community by a competing denominational church. Such a situation is illustrated by the following extract from a letter that accompanied a schedule:

> We had 103 members in an independent organization and everything was progressing nicely. . . . Suddenly a denominational church out in the country . . . conceived an idea that they too must come into the village. . . . They took advantage of the fact of no denominational organization . . . failing to recognize the independent or community church. . . . To get backing from a larger body the village church organized under Congregational plans.

Another undenominational church took a similar step, "recognizing that the success of any community church is conditional upon some larger organization . . . to give it permanency." In this case an undenominational church and a Methodist church united as a community church under

[1] Morse and Brunner, *The Town and Country Church in the United States* (New York, Doran, 1923), p. 107.

Methodist supervision. The need of backing to ensure permanency was particularly great in communities where population was shifting rapidly, as in lumber camps and mining towns.

In states where there was a home-missions council or other interdenominational organization, this agency sometimes assisted an undenominational church to choose a denomination and to become affiliated with it. Sometimes the church applied for assistance; in other cases a home-missions council, after a team survey, presented a recommendation.

THOSE FORMERLY DENOMINATIONAL

Other affiliated churches originated not from undenominational churches but from churches that were originally denominational in the traditional sense. This was the case with at least nine of the thirty-seven affiliated churches listed. Six of these made the change deliberately, through reorganization under a new constitution at a definite date. A small Disciples church in the far West, which during many years had failed to provide acceptable service for a community composed of very diverse elements including some Mormons, after a careful study of the situation decided that although there were but very few Presbyterians in the vicinity, the Presbyterian denomination would be best adapted to give them supervision. They therefore affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, were given Presbyterian ministers, and were granted Presbyterian home-mission aid. In another community the change was accomplished with the coöperation of a lumber company that owned the whole town, including the church building that it erected for the reorganized church. In this place a weak Methodist church, by adopting the status of affiliation with the Methodist Conference, won the support of residents of many denominations, whom they registered in separate denominational rolls.

Some denominational community churches reached the status of affiliation not by sudden, deliberate action but as the result of a slow process of growth. One such church,

reporting in a schedule, "This was a Congregational church which became entirely independent," and recognized by denominational officials as in great measure independent though reported in the *Congregational Year-Book,* was nevertheless still incorporated under its old partly denominational title and had made no modification in its constitution, which, being Congregational, could be made to serve under the altered conditions. The change here was reported as having been a "gradual evolution."

Some denominational churches exchanged close allegiance for a loose affiliation because of a desire to draw into membership people of many denominations, and to adapt their organization and methods to local conditions, thereby becoming in full measure the church of the entire community. Reasons why they adopted affiliation instead of throwing off all connection with the denomination to become undenominational churches, are suggested by the following extract from one of the weekly bulletins of such a church:

> First—at this late day it would not be right to go back on the mother which in the beginning fostered and cared for the church.
>
> Second—it is better for every church to belong to some one of the orderly groups of Christians. Christians cannot stand for anarchy or bolshevism. It is good to have a fellowship in the great work of the Kingdom, and it is good to have all things done in an orderly manner. The minister as well as the church must have standing in a regular way. At present this is possible only through some one of the regular Christian bodies. . . .

THOSE ORIGINALLY AFFILIATED

In states where denominations were allocated territory through interdenominational agreement, some affiliated churches were established as such from the beginning by denominational superintendents. This naturally took place chiefly on the frontier.

THOSE FORMED BY UNION OF CHURCHES

Still another way in which an affiliated church sometimes came into existence, was through the combination of two

or more denominational churches. How this happened is illustrated in the following explanation, which accompanied a schedule:

> The Community Church of . . . resulted from the business men of the town protesting against the number of churches they were compelled to support. An agreement was arrived at between the Methodist and Congregational churches that a vote of the town should determine which denomination remained and which withdrew. It was practically a vote of the whole Protestant population of the town which decided in favor of the Congregational church remaining.
>
> The church was to be known as a community church, though it is under the supervision of the State Congregational officials. . . . The new board of trustees was made up of two members from the old Methodist Episcopal church, two members from the old Congregational church, and two representatives of the business men of the town who belonged to neither of the old organizations.

The history of another affiliated church was outlined as follows:

> This church was formed four years ago by the union of the Presbyterian, Reformed and English Lutheran Churches. The legal name is The . . . Community Church. It by vote is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, to whose Boards it contributes its benevolences.

When several churches united in this way they usually, like the two churches used as examples, referred to a vote the choice of denomination, sometimes undertaking a canvass of the community.

Two cases of affiliation came into existence after the abandonment of experiments in federation.

Characteristics

Affiliated churches, though young and not thoroughly standardized, yet showed certain marked common characteristics. They shared with churches of other types of union inclusiveness in membership. That is, they gave, in the words of a bulletin from which a passage has already been quoted, "a welcome to all Christians on an equal basis. . . . The Baptist can remain a Baptist and the Methodist a Methodist. In the Community Church all have sweet fellowship

together. Each one is allowed to retain his own convictions provided he permits his neighbor the same privilege." The membership thus described was full membership. If such churches had an associate membership, it was designed for other purposes than to restrict voting powers on account of denomination.

As to organization, the affiliated churches were self-governing in all local affairs; and each of them had, as a rule, a constitution of its own making. These two characteristics most readily distinguished the churches of this type that were affiliated with denominations other than the Congregational. All Congregational churches are supposed to govern themselves and to adopt their own constitution; churches affiliated with this denomination, as has already been said, have to be distinguished by the attitude of the local church people toward the denomination and the attitude of denominational officials toward the church.

The minister of an affiliated church was provided, as a rule, by the denomination with which it was affiliated. To this there were some exceptions. One church, affiliated with the Congregational denomination for many years, had had one Unitarian minister and two or three Methodist ministers; yet even in this case most of the ministers had been Congregationalists.

The benevolences of affiliated churches were generally contributed largely to the boards of the denomination with which each was connected. This did not mean they were not at liberty to send contributions elsewhere. Of a church already used as an example, it was declared:

> In its missionary gifts the Community Church acts as a forwarding agent for all the missionary boards. Each member has the privilege of choosing his own board. Naturally the church feels a special responsibility for the different Congregational boards. All missionary gifts not designated to some other board go toward the Congregational apportionment.

The provision in force for another church affiliated with a Methodist Conference was that it should pay assessments toward the salary of the bishop and of the district superintendent but no other assessment. In dealing with a little

church in the Mountain area which was but loosely connected with a denomination the name of which "just happened to be attached," the denominational superintendent said that he emphasized the needs of the local people but told them, "When you send money to missions remember where you belong."

The property of the affiliated church was, as a rule, in the hands of local trustees. This was the case even in regard to a certain church affiliated with a Methodist Conference. The property of two other churches of Methodist affiliation was held, however, by the respective conferences.

A few churches primarily affiliated with one denomination included a group of members affiliated with another denomination or even two groups each of different affiliation. One such church, Congregational in primary affiliation, had within it a group of Presbyterians and another of Methodists, each with a special treasurer for benevolences. Another church, primarily Congregational, reported not only its Congregational statistics to the *Congregational Year-Book,* but its Presbyterian membership and benevolences to the Presbyterian *Minutes.* Another church, of Presbyterian affiliation, had an assistant minister who was a Baptist.

Summary

During the few years preceding this study, affiliated churches had arisen independently in all areas of the field investigated and in connection with a number of denominations, including all those chiefly concerned in the local union of churches. Developing in some cases from traditional denominational churches and in others from undenominational churches, they exhibited certain characteristics of each; and although affiliated churches had not been generally recognized as forming a distinct type of union, these characteristics were fairly constant. Affiliated churches arose spontaneously out of local requirements, being neither stimulated by propaganda nor engineered by official agencies. Certain affiliated churches, however, had been sponsored by state interdenominational agencies; and ten were known

to have received home-mission aid, such grants having been made by at least three denominations. All these considerations taken together made it reasonable to accept the affiliated church, in spite of the recent development of most of the examples, as a distinct and important type of church union.

Chapter VI

COMPARISONS

Four types of united churches have now been considered separately. In the present chapter, federated churches, undenominational churches and denominational united churches including affiliated churches, will be compared statistically [1] with churches of the traditional kind and with one another. The comparison will show that strictly denominational churches in places of comparable size, exhibited from area to area striking similarity in figures for membership, for local expenditures, for benevolences and the like; and that with these figures corresponding figures for all types of united churches showed marked contrasts. The conclusion is unavoidable that united churches, regardless of type, are so unlike churches of the traditional kind that they must be regarded as forming a distinct phenomenon.

In comparing united churches with strictly denominational churches, use will be made of statistical data obtained by the Institute of Social and Religious Research in several different investigations.

These sets of data are as follows:

(1) Statistics for 179 counties based on schedules obtained by the Interchurch World Movement in 1919 and 1920. The counties were selected for completeness and accuracy of survey and for representative character both as to distribution and as to environment. The number of churches concerned in the statistics is 5,552. The data were published in *The Town and Country Church in the United States* and in *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*. This body of material will here be referred to as "the 179 Counties."

(2) Interchurch survey materials also obtained in 1919 and 1920 for twenty-five counties selected for their typical character, checked and completed by investigators of the Committee of Social and Religious Surveys in 1921. These counties are

[1] The statistics given in this chapter are presented in tabular form in the Appendix, Tables II and IV-X.

situated in all parts of the United States. The number of churches included is 1,031. This material was reported in the same books as was that for the 179 Counties. In referring to this second group of facts use will be made of the expression "the Twenty-five Counties."

(3) A few statistics for 331 village churches and for 349 country churches in comparable farming environments of the Middle West. The averages are based on figures procured by the Interchurch World Movement in 1919 and 1920, and are presented in *Diagnosing the Rural Church.* The population of each of the villages lies between 250 and 750. These statistics will be referred to as those of "Farming Villages" and of "Farming Country Communities."

(4) Survey materials gathered in 1922 by investigators of the Institute concerning forty churches chosen for their success in many kinds of environments all over the United States. Though the study was not primarily statistical, numerical data were gathered in regard to certain points. Most of the few figures based on these data are scattered in *Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches;* one or two have not hitherto been published. These churches will be referred to as the "Successful Churches."

(5) Statistics collected and compiled during the years 1923 through 1925 in the American Village Study. The village churches included number 679. For the churches in the 140 large and small villages taken together many kinds of statistics are available; and for 145 churches in 47 villages with a population of the center not over 1,000 and in most cases not under 500, there are available data of certain kinds. The former kind of data will be identified as of "140 Villages," the latter as of "47 Small Villages." Many of the figures used here will appear in a forthcoming volume containing Village Study findings; others, including all the figures regarding the churches in Small Villages, are based upon additional information in the files of the Institute.

Many of the statements that follow have already been presented in previous chapters. They are repeated here for the sake of the clear conceptions that should result from bringing them sharply into comparison.

For the convenience of the reader, the facts under each topic will be presented in a uniform order. First will be given the data for strictly denominational churches in the order of size of community; and afterwards the corresponding figures for the different types of united churches, the points of agreement and of contrast being made clear.

Distribution

Data concerning the 179 Counties show that of all churches in town and country area, three-fifths, 60.0 per cent., were in the country or in hamlets;[2] that nearly a third, 32.2 per cent., were in villages; and that the remaining 7.8 per cent. were in towns. Of the united churches, only one-third, 33.9 per cent., were in the country, and nearly two-thirds, 62.2 per cent., were in villages. Therefore a far smaller proportion of country churches were united churches than was the case for village churches. In either hamlets or villages of a population not over 1,000 were found 73.2 per cent. of all cases of union; the proportions for the different types showing fairly close agreement—for the denominational type, 71.6 per cent.; for the federated type, 74.2 per cent.; for the undenominational type, 77.4 per cent.

Of the denominational united churches, however, a larger proportion were found in the country and in hamlets; so that about five-sixths, 82.9 per cent., of the total number of cases of this form of union were in communities with the population of the center not over one thousand. Of the federated churches, on the other hand, nine-tenths, 90.5 per cent., were either in hamlets or in villages of all sizes, there being very few in the open country. The united church of the denominational type, therefore, proved to be a phenomenon of the small village, the hamlet and the country; the federated church, chiefly a phenomenon of the hamlet and the village, especially of the small village.

Membership

Average membership

Since the most nearly uniform figures for church-membership available for federated and for denominational united churches in published denominational statistics were for total membership, it was requisite that the figures for the traditional kind of churches used as a basis of comparison,

[2] Computed from figures on page 35 of *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.*

should also be for total membership. The average total membership of the village churches in the 179 Counties was 108; that of the country churches, 72. These figures formed the best basis for comparison with the averages for united churches; for not only were they based on the largest number of cases, but the village churches of the 179 Counties were in villages of all sizes, including those in the small villages in which so many united churches were found, while a large proportion of the villages surveyed in the American Village Study had populations of over 500. The average total membership of the churches in Small Villages, the population of these villages being usually between 500 and 1,000, was 146; and the corresponding figure for the 140 Villages, with populations usually between 500 and 2,500, was 157.

Since so large a proportion of the denominational united churches were in small communities, the total membership for this type would be expected to lie between 72, the figure for country churches, and 108, the figure for village churches in the 179 Counties. The actual average, based upon the figures for 383 united churches, was 105. In spite of the large number of churches of this type in hamlets and in open-country communities, the average total membership approached that for the villages of the 179 Counties.

The general average for total membership of undenominational churches was 115, which exceeded the average for village churches in the 179 Counties. It must be taken into consideration, however, that the average for undenominational churches was raised by a few large churches, and that more than a fourth of the churches of this type for which figures were obtained had a membership of fifty or less.

The average total membership of federated churches would naturally be expected to correspond to the 108 of the village churches of the 179 Counties, or possibly to approach the average for churches in Small Villages, which was 146. But the average for federated churches was 172, which not only exceeded these averages but even that for churches of the 140 Villages, namely, 157.

The total memberships of both federated and denominational united churches, therefore, approximated the averages for strictly denominational churches in larger communities.

PROPORTION OF MEMBERS RESIDENT

The resident members of the churches of the Twenty-five Counties formed 87.1 per cent. of the total membership. For the Village churches the proportion was 82.0 per cent. In the membership figures given in denominational statistics, resident and non-resident members were not always segregated. The distribution was made, however, for the united churches studied in field surveys; and the figures obtained for the three types were so similar that they probably represented a genuine tendency. The proportion for denominational united churches surveyed was 79.6 per cent.; that for federated churches, 78.6 per cent.; and that for undenominational churches, 80.2 per cent. United churches of all types, therefore, retained on their rolls a larger proportion of non-resident members than did the average church.

SEX OF MEMBERS

Women and girls formed 58.4 per cent. of the church-membership in the churches of the Twenty-five Counties; and for the Successful Churches the proportion was almost exactly the same, being 58.5 per cent. In the membership of united churches surveyed, the proportion of women and girls was somewhat higher for all types of union. For the denominational united church it was 59.8 per cent., not far from the proportion prevailing for usual churches; for the federated church it was 61.7 per cent.; and for the undenominational church, which proved to have the highest proportion of feminine members, it was 63.1 per cent.

ADDITIONS

Of the members of the Village churches, 8.9 per cent. had been received during the year 1923-24. The ratio to total membership of the number added during the year be-

fore the survey, was lowest, 5.5 per cent., for federated churches. But since many federated churches received members also to an undenominational roll, the figure was inadequate, how much so cannot be determined. For undenominational churches the ratio was 7.0 per cent. The denominational united churches, with 10.8 per cent., made the best record in this matter among the three types of union; and they surpassed the record of the Village churches.

Total Budget

AVERAGE EXPENDITURE OF THE CHURCH

The average total expenditure for the 1,031 churches of the Twenty-five Counties was $1,311;[3] that for Farming Villages was $1,470;[4] that for 140 Villages, $2,290; and that for churches in the 47 Small Villages, $2,415. The Successful Churches had the much higher average budget of $4,900.[5]

Both the general average for denominational united churches, $2,813, and the closely similar figure for federated churches, $2,867, exceeded not only the figure for country and village churches combined in the Twenty-five Counties, but also the average for the 140 Villages and the larger average for the 47 Small Villages. The general average for undenominational churches was $2,565; but this figure was affected by the comparatively high expenditure of certain exceptionally large churches.

PER CAPITA

In considering per capita expenditure, that is, the average annual expenditure per church-member, it must be borne in mind that figures for per capita expenditure have usually been computed in the surveys of the Institute on the basis of

[3] *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*, p. 80.
[4] Fry, *Diagnosing the Rural Church*, p. 154.
[5] *Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches*, p. 116.

resident membership. Since total membership is invariably larger, per capitas based on total membership would be smaller than per capitas for the same churches based on resident membership; for the larger the divisor the smaller the quotient. For the Twenty-five Counties the average annual expenditure per resident member was $17.81; and

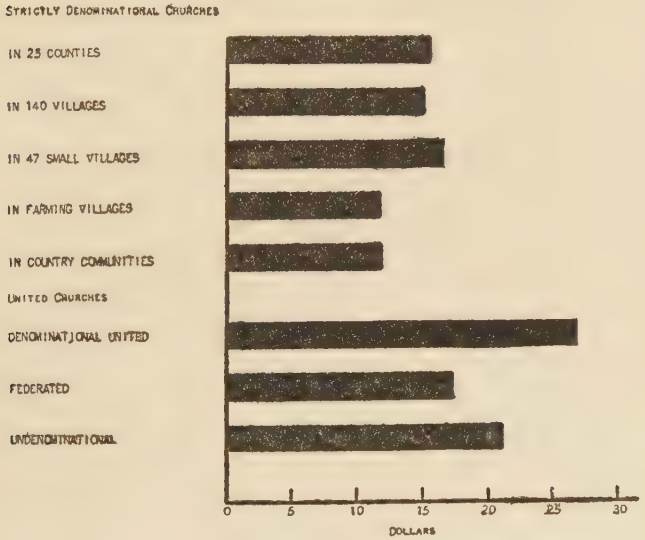

DIAGRAM III. PER CAPITA TOTAL EXPENDITURES OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES AND OF UNITED CHURCHES.

for the Village churches it was $16.89. Translated into terms of total membership, the per capita expenditure for the Twenty-five Counties was $15.51; the corresponding figure for Villages was $15.03, and that for Small Villages was $16.53.

Besides these averages based on numerous and broadly typical cases, other figures, all based on resident membership, are available for groups of churches under special conditions. For the Farming Villages the expenditure per resident member was $11.74;[6] that of village churches

[6] *Diagnosing the Rural Church*, p. 154.

in the Twenty-five Counties was $19.33;[7] that of town and country churches with resident ministers in the same field was $20.96;[7] and that of the Successful Churches was $19.93.[8]

The type of united churches having a per capita expenditure most nearly resembling the former group of per capitas, those of average town and country churches, was the federated church, for which the expenditure per individual of the total membership was $17.26. Even this was distinctly higher, not merely than the figures for the average church based on the same kind of membership, namely $15.03, $15.51 and $16.53; but also than the average expenditure per resident member in the Village churches, namely, $16.89. The general average for federated churches, moreover, was exceeded in the Northern Colonial area, where the per capita expenditure based on total membership was $22.46. The undenominational churches had the rather higher per capita expenditure of $21.00. The annual expenditure per member of the denominational united churches exceeded all these, the figure for the whole field being $26.90 and that for the Pacific coast rising to $42.10. It was thus higher than the average contribution of resident members for the Successful Churches, $19.93; and even the corresponding figure for churches of the Twenty-five Counties that had a resident minister, which was $20.96. The contributions, therefore, of united churches of all types and preëminently of denominational united churches, exceeded those of strictly denominational churches, even when under exceptionally favorable conditions, as Diagram III shows.

Local Expenditures

AVERAGE PER CHURCH

The part of the church budget that was applied to local church expenditures averaged for the Twenty-five Counties $913. As before, it must be remembered that the 1,031

[7] *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*, p. 80.
[8] *Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches*, p. 114.

churches involved in this average included many country churches. The average for the Farming Villages was $1,015. For the 140 Villages the corresponding figure was $1,561; and for Small Villages, it was $1,665.

The three types of united churches had average local expenditures closely resembling one another. The home expenditures of fifty-five undenominational churches averaged $2,300; those of sixty-one federated churches averaged

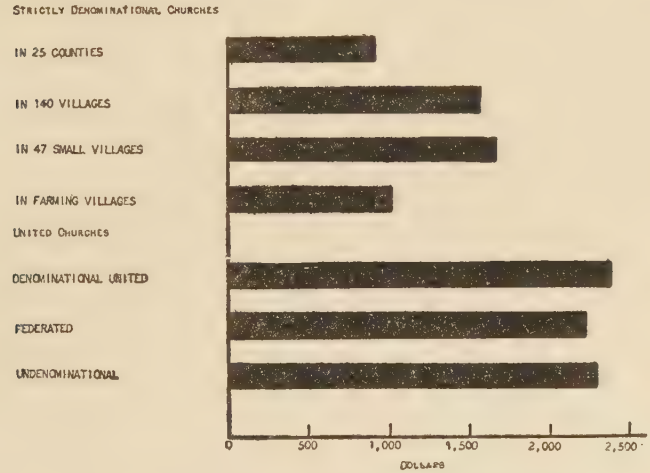

DIAGRAM IV. AVERAGE LOCAL EXPENDITURES OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES AND OF UNITED CHURCHES.

$2,224; and those of 383 denominational united churches, $2,396. As Diagram IV shows graphically, all these figures are considerably higher than the corresponding figures for strictly denominational churches, not only for the Twenty-five Counties, but for the 140 Villages and for the 47 Small Villages. In size of local budget the denominational united churches took the lead.

SALARIES

In comparing figures for salary there must be kept in mind the distinction between payments for salary made by the

churches and amounts received as salary by ministers, who may serve one church or more than one.

As standard averages for strictly denominational churches there are available four average payments in salary per church. That for the Twenty-five Counties was $539; that for the Farming Villages, $732;[9] that for Villages, $998; and that for Small Villages, $1,110.

For salary received by ministers, there were available also several figures, all of which included an allowance of $250 for every minister that had free use of a parsonage. For the 179 Counties the average salary received by a minister serving only one church was $1,430;[10] and that for ministers serving two or more churches was $1,300. The average for all resident ministers in the Twenty-five Counties was $1,030.[11] The average salary received from churches, exclusive of home-mission aid, by the ministers of the Successful Churches, all of whom were resident, was $1,661.[12]

The salary figures for the united churches, since they were drawn from denominational statistics, were for payments made by churches. No allowance was made for the free use of a parsonage. The average payment for salary made by the denominational united churches was $1,349; that made by the undenominational churches was $1,403; and that made by federated churches, $1,615. These payments for salary exceeded in every instance the corresponding averages for strictly denominational churches, and even approximated and in certain instances surpassed average salaries received by ministers, even though the latter included cash equivalents for the use of a parsonage. They all greatly exceeded the average in the Twenty-five Counties for resident ministers; and the salary payment of the federated churches exceeded the salary of ministers in the 179 Counties that served one church only. None of these averages, however, equaled the average salary received by the ministers of Successful Churches.

[9] *Diagnosing the Rural Church*, p. 154.
[10] *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*, p. 81.
[11] *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, p. 147.
[12] Computed from data on page 117 of *Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches.*

NON-MEMBER SUBSCRIBERS

Churches in competing situations do not as a rule obtain a large proportion of their receipts from non-members. This state of things existed even for the Successful Churches. The united churches surveyed, on the other hand, drew about one-fourth, 24.6 per cent., of their subscribers from among non-members; and received from these non-members about one-seventh, 14.6 per cent., of the entire amount of money raised for local expenditures. The highest proportion on both these points prevailed for denominational united churches, for which the proportion of subscribers that were non-members was 32.0 per cent., and the proportion of the budget subscribed by non-members was 22.6 per cent. For the federated churches the corresponding proportions were 21.5 per cent. and 12.4 per cent.; and for the undenominational churches, 23.2 per cent. and 12.1 per cent.

Benevolences

PROPORTION OF BUDGET

The proportion of the budget devoted to benevolences in the Twenty-five Counties averaged 30.4 per cent. For the 140 Villages the proportion was 31.8 per cent.; for the 47 Small Villages it was 31.0 per cent. For the Successful Churches, which were carrying on heavy local programs, the proportion devoted to benevolences was 26.0 per cent.[13]

The normal apportionment to benevolences was most nearly approached among the types of united churches by federated churches, which for the whole field applied in this way 22.4 per cent. of their total expenditures, and in the Northern Colonial area, 25.5 per cent. Denominational united churches, with their smaller membership and their heavy home expenditures, devoted to benevolences an average of only 14.8 per cent. for the whole field; and in the Northern Colonial area, where the proportion was highest, of only 18.6 per cent. The undenominational churches had an average of only 10.3 per cent. devoted to benevolences.

[13] *Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches*, p. 117.

AVERAGE PER CHURCH

The average benevolence contribution per church was for the Twenty-five Counties, $399; for the Small Villages, $749 and for Villages, $729. Among the types of united churches, the lowest average contribution was made by the undenominational churches, for which the average was $265, far below even the lowest of the averages for the traditional church. The large churches of this type contributed an

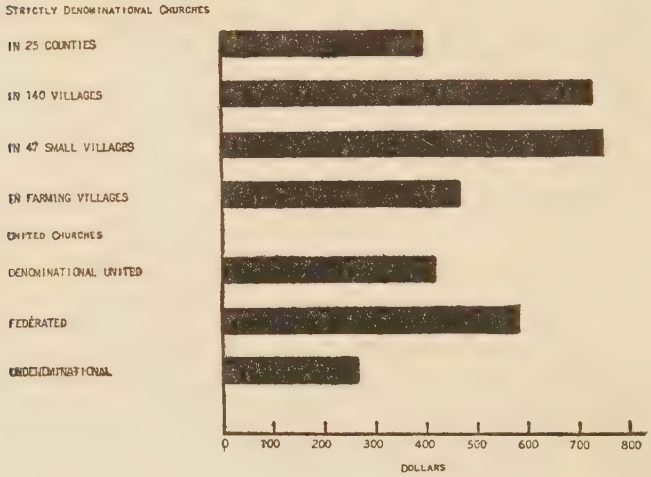

DIAGRAM V. AVERAGE BENEVOLENCES OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES AND OF UNITED CHURCHES.

average of $438 and the small churches an average of only $131. The denominational united churches made an average annual contribution of $417. Among the types the federated churches made the best record, having for its general average $581, and reaching in the Middle West what was the highest average for any area and for any type of union, namely, $676; although for the Small Villages of that area the average sum applied to benevolences per church was only $477. Diagram V presents the comparisons.

PER CAPITA

The per capita contribution to benevolences for town and country churches of the Twenty-five Counties, translated into terms of total membership, was $4.91.[14] The corre-

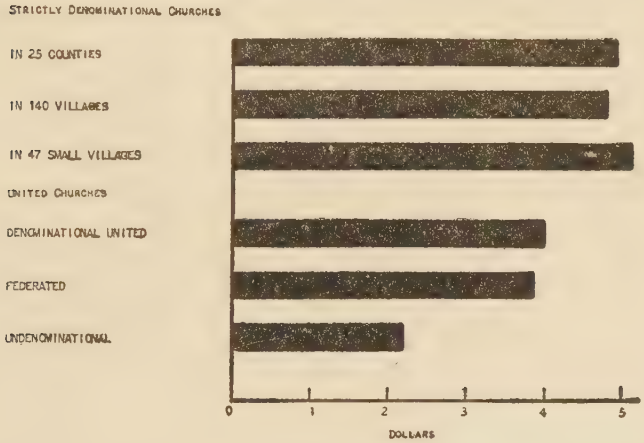

DIAGRAM VI. PER CAPITA BENEVOLENCES OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES AND OF UNITED CHURCHES.

sponding figure for Villages was $4.79; and for Small Villages, $5.13.

These per capitas for strictly denominational churches are shown in Diagram VI, in comparison with the per capita benevolences of united churches of three types. For denominational united churches the figure was $3.98; for federated churches it was $3.84; and for undenominational churches, $2.17. The united churches, with their emphasis on work for their own communities, were not strong in their gifts to benevolences; and among the three types the undenominational churches fell far below the others.

14 *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*, p. 80.

New Phenomena

The statistics from which were drawn the averages for churches of the traditional kind were compiled, as was said at the beginning of this chapter, in the course of five different studies from as many bodies of material, and for different purposes. Yet among the averages upon each point there is a striking similarity. The three figures for total expenditure per member, for example—$15.03, $15.51, and $16.53—are so close together that the greatest variation from the common average is only 5.4 per cent. The conclusion is inevitable that in spite of the differences noticed by an observer between any two given churches, there yet exists a normal or average church.

From the similar averages just given, the per capita expenditure of denominational churches in peculiar situations showed some divergence. Those for country communities and for small villages, both in comparable agricultural environments—$11.78 and $11.74—were alike in falling below the general average. The averages for Successful Churches, for the churches having resident ministers, and for village churches, in the Twenty-five Counties, on the other hand, exceeded the general average. In all these cases divergence from the general average was associated with difference in conditions.

A far greater divergence from the general average of the per capita for denominational churches was found for each of the types of united churches. The per capita expenditures of the federated churches was 10.0 per cent. above that average; that of the undenominational churches, 33.8 per cent. above; and that of the denominational united churches, 71.4 per cent. above.

In this matter, united churches of the three types differed from one another still more widely than they differed from strictly denominational churches. In certain other respects, united churches of the three types closely resembled one another. The proportions of the total memberships that were resident were almost exactly the same: federated, 78.6 per cent.; denominational united, 79.6 per cent.; undenomi-

national, 80.2 per cent. Remarkable agreement was shown also in their average local expenditures: federated, $2,224; undenominational, $2,300; denominational united, $2,396. Closely similar, moreover, were their average payments on salary: denominational united, $1,349; undenominational, $1,403; federated, $1,615. On the first two of these points the divergency among the types is far less than the divergency of all three types from figures for strictly denominational churches.

United churches of the three types alike excelled the average church in the following respects. The total membership of churches of the different types of union approached or exceeded the figures for strictly denominational churches in larger communities. United churches of all types expended more money on salary and on other items of local church maintenance, and therefore had larger budgets and larger per capita contributions. They also received a larger part of their funds from non-members.

On the other hand, the united churches fell below strictly denominational churches in two important respects. They had in their total membership a larger proportion of non-residents. They also made a comparatively poor record in benevolences, both as regards the average expenditure per church, the average expenditure per member and the proportion of the total expenditures devoted to benevolences.

Denominational United Churches, Including Affiliated Churches

The strong points of the denominational united churches proved to be these: though a large proportion of them were in small communities, their membership nearly reached the general average for the village churches of the 179 Counties. Their average total budget was more than twice as large as that of the town and country churches of the Twenty-five Counties, and considerably larger than that of the churches of the 47 Small Villages; it was nearly, though not quite, as high as that for federated churches. Their average local expenditures were not only higher than all figures for strictly

denominational churches, but somewhat higher than the corresponding averages for the other types of united churches. Their per capita expenditures, both for total and for local expenditures, were far above any of the figures for strictly denominational churches, and exceeded those for churches of other types of union. Their average payment for salary was higher than that of strictly denominational churches. They made a stronger appeal than the united churches of other types to the pockets of non-members. The additions during the preceding year formed a comparatively large part of the total membership.

The greatest weakness of the denominational united churches that was revealed by statistics, related to their benevolences. The proportion of their expenditures applied to benevolences was only half as great as that for strictly denominational churches, and only two-thirds as great as that for federated churches. Though the contribution per member was slightly above that for united churches of the other types it was decidedly below that for strictly denominational churches; and the contribution per church fell below that of federated churches.

Federated Churches

Federated churches showed comparative strength in the following points: their average total membership was not only the highest among the types of union, but it exceeded that of Village churches. Their average total expenditure was the highest among types of united churches, and exceeded considerably the figures for Villages and for Small Villages. Their average expenditures for local purposes were not far below those of denominational united churches. Their figures for per capita expenditures, both total and local, exceeded all the standard averages for strictly denominational churches. Their average payment for salary, moreover, was not only far higher than the averages for churches of the traditional kind, but exceeded those of united churches of the other types. Their average benevolences of churches, though below the average for Small

Villages, yet considerably exceeded the corresponding sums for other types of union; and their total benevolences in 1923-24 showed an increase over those of the denominational churches composing them during the year before federation. The proportion of total expenditure devoted to benevolences was about three-fourths of the average for the Twenty-five Counties and was one and a half times that for denominational united churches.

On the other hand, federated churches were somewhat weaker than united churches of the other types in two particulars. In the proportion of the total membership received during the year, so far as reported by denominational annuals, they ranked considerably below the others. And their figures for per capita expenditures, both for total budget and for local expenditures, though higher than for strictly denominational churches, were smaller than the corresponding figures for churches of the other two types of union.

Undenominational Churches

Since undenominational churches were less numerous than the churches of the other two groups, and since the undenominational churches differed greatly among themselves, the statistics for these churches were not so authoritative and significant as were those for churches of the other types. The strong points of this type may tentatively be said to be these: it had a high average for local expenditures in comparison with strictly denominational churches and nearly as high an average as those of united churches of the other types. It is important, however, to point out that this average is not so reliable as the averages for the other types, as was explained in Chapter III. The average salary payment was not far from the average per minister for ministers serving one church in the 179 Counties, and was above the average for the 140 Villages.

The weak points of undenominational churches, as far as those were brought out by statistical comparisons, were the following: The average total membership, though somewhat

larger than that of denominational united churches, was considerably lower than that of federated churches. The averages of undenominational churches in respect to benevolences were far lower not only than corresponding figures for strictly denominational churches but also than parallel averages for the other types of union.

Changes from One Type to Another

Churches of the traditional sort and churches of each of the four types of union were found to have changed into churches of other kinds. Six hundred and forty-three denominational churches had entered into federations; 101 had become parts of undenominational churches; and over a dozen had become loosely affiliated. Not fewer than eighty experiments in federation had ended within a short period in separation, either partial or complete; and not fewer than twenty-two federated churches had become denominational consolidated churches. Seven or more federated churches had become undenominational; and fully thirty federated churches had, besides their denominational rolls, an undenominational membership list. Among former undenominational churches thirty-one, if not more, had become denominational united churches, not fewer than fifteen had become affiliated churches, and an unknown number had become denominational churches of the traditional kind.

Conclusions

From facts presented in this part of the book there follow several general conclusions:

(1) United churches form a new phenomenon distinct from denominational churches of the traditional kind.

(2) There were found in the United States strong churches of each of the four types of union.

(3) Each type had its own peculiar elements of strength.

(4) The federated churches and the denominational united churches made a better showing in almost every way than traditional churches.

(5) In certain respects the federated, the undenominational and the denominational types of union differed from one another more widely than any one of them differed from the traditional church. In other respects, they strongly resembled one another.

(6) United churches of each type readily change to other types.

(7) Loose affiliation with a denominational body had been adopted both by certain denominational churches and by certain undenominational churches.

PART III
PROBLEMS

PART III: PROBLEMS

Chapter VII

COMBINING FORCES

In the preceding section, types of united churches were considered separately, and were compared statistically with the strictly denominational church and with one another. The third part of the book, now beginning, will show how local united churches of all types have met their common problems. Here few statistics will be used: the successive chapters, each devoted to a single problem or group of problems, will describe the various methods by which these problems have in some measure been solved by united churches.

How to become united has been the first problem presented when union has been contemplated. The present chapter will therefore show the different ways in which churches or groups of individuals, different in denomination, have formed single organizations, at least for all local purposes.

It was found that union had been formed in situations of three different kinds: first, in communities in which there was no organized church, and in which the elements united had consisted of families or groups of families of several, and in some cases of many, denominational origins; secondly, in communities having a single strictly denominational church that had failed to meet the religious needs of certain elements in the community differing from itself in denomination; and, finally, in communities in which there had been two or more churches.

Communities Without a Church

In communities without a church—whether new communities or communities that had recently entered a period of development—the initiative was often taken by state interdenominational agencies, where these existed, or by denominational home-mission boards; each of which situations presented problems not entirely local and therefore outside the field of the present chapter.

When the local people made the first move, they often applied to the district superintendent of the denomination preferred by the majority. In case of difficulty in choosing a denomination, they often turned to a state federation of churches or to a home-missions council, if either existed, for advice and assistance. In the absence of such an agency it was usual to canvass the community to determine, first, whether the desired united church should be undenominational or denominational; and, if the latter, with what denomination it should be connected.

An application to the Comity Commission of the Federation of Churches of a certain far-western state resulted in the recommendation that a canvass be made, in the course of which every family in the community should be asked to answer the following questions:

1. Do you desire a community church in .....
2. Do you desire it to be affiliated with some one denomination?
3. If so, what denomination do you prefer, 1st choice .....; 2nd choice .....
4. What will you give per week to support this church?

Communities with One Church

In communities in which one denominational church had failed to enlist the coöperation and to meet the religious needs of other denominational elements in the community, one of three different courses was taken. Sometimes the existing church, remaining of the same denomination, adopted either open membership or associate membership,

and entered upon a broad program of evangelism and community service. In such a course the lead was taken either by a denominational superintendent favoring union, or by a local minister or by lay leaders of the local church or community.

In other situations, the local church organization, because its field of service was believed to be narrowed by its denominational name, or by some such denominational practice as immersion, changed its denominational affiliation. A certain Disciples church in the far West, after many years of restricted service, decided to become Presbyterian; and a former Baptist church sought connection with a Methodist conference. In a few such cases the resulting church was loosely affiliated rather than strictly denominational. Where it seemed probable that no sort of denominational church could win coöperation from all elements of the community, some denominational churches sundered relations with their overhead bodies in order to combine with members of various other faiths in forming undenominational churches.

Communities with Two or More Churches

The problem of uniting usually proved far more difficult in a community in which there were two or more churches, each with its loyal adherents and each under a separate overhead body. Public sentiment in favor of union sometimes developed of itself; sometimes it was deliberately fostered over a long period of years before union resulted.

Changing Public Sentiment

Toward this change of public sentiment, influence was frequently exerted by local ministers not only through advocacy of union in public addresses, but through conversation, and through a spirit of tolerance and general friendliness. Like-minded ministers often brought about various forms of practical coöperation among their churches. Not a few ministers, to facilitate union, resigned their pulpits. Well-known exponents of the community church idea, including pastors

of notable united churches, also exerted influence favorable to union in many places by addresses, given when practicable in public halls, the invitations to which were general.

The press of many villages gave space to articles favoring the union of the local churches, one such paper having published eleven articles on the subject in the course of a single year.

The example of earlier united churches, especially of those near enough to be visited, was also influential. So was information obtained from a distance by correspondence; a federated church in Connecticut, for instance, had much to do with the formation of one near the Pacific coast.

Local discussion was even more effective. In one community the investigator was told, "All that year, if you joined a group of people, you would find them talking about a federated church."

LOSS OF A BUILDING

Popular sentiment in favor of union was crystallized in a considerable number of places by the loss of one church building by fire, lightning, or tornado. The church that still possessed a house of worship invited the other church to join common services. At first the arrangement was usually provisional. Sometimes both ministers were kept on for a time. After the feasibility of coöperation had been proved by the enforced experiment, organic union frequently followed.

INFORMAL COÖPERATION BETWEEN PASTORATES

Similar experimental partnerships arose during interregnums between pastorates, the people of the church without a minister attending the services and sharing in the work of a neighboring church. Such arrangements, even when accidental and temporary, sometimes prepared the way for union. Sometimes a church, with the intention of coöperating for a time with a neighboring one, purposely delayed calling a pastor, and occasionally the neighboring church in its turn had no minister and its members for a time at-

tended the other church. In a few cases there was a formal agreement that the churches should take turns in having pastors to serve the two congregations.

ABORTIVE AND INCOMPLETE UNIONS

During the years of popular agitation looking toward union many communities made formal attempts at union that for the time being ended in failure. This was particularly common where the church leaders were advanced in years and had lived in the community for a long time. People on both sides sometimes insisted that all the ministers of a united church should be of their own denomination. One or more of the local churches were in some places willing to unite only in what was called by a certain denominational official "the cat and canary form of union"; that is, they were ready to absorb the other church but not to enter into partnership with it.

Another set of obstacles sometimes found serious were connected with property. Endowments were so tied up that the income was not available for a united church. Or neither side was willing to worship in the building belonging to the other. Or, again, denominational authorities holding the title to church property refused to transfer it to a church of the type of union locally desired.

Denominational superintendents, moreover, in many cases exerted an influence cemented during years of leadership, to bring about a vote against union. The question, "Why did you vote to stay out?" was sometimes answered, "What else could I do, with the presiding elder right there?"

An attempt at union that for the time being ended in failure, had in many places the effect of preparing the way for union a few years afterwards.

In several places where a united church had been formed, local people believed there would have been better results if there had been less haste. Either a church left outside the union might have been induced to participate in the movement, it was thought, or greater harmony might have been attained within the united church.

Initiative in Union Movements

Once the ground was thoroughly prepared, the first step toward formal union was taken by one of four different officials or agencies: the minister or ministers; an informal group of laymen; the official boards of the two or more churches acting in coöperation; and one of the churches, through formal action in a church meeting.

A letter addressed by the official boards of two churches to every member of each church pointed out that neither church was strong enough to have a satisfactory pastor, suggested that the two churches federate, and appointed a meeting to consider the plan. In many cases a similar communication, either in the form of a letter or of a set of resolutions, was sent by one of the churches. Usually it was answered by another equally formal, accepting, rejecting, or modifying the proposal.

Joint Committee

A joint committee, consisting of representatives of the churches intending to unite, was frequently authorized to make arrangements. In one place the committee members gave talks at a union morning service. Joint committees were usually empowered to take up the matter of union with the denominational superintendents. Some superintendents responded cordially, attended a joint meeting of the churches, and coöperated in every possible way, often furnishing a form of constitution. Others, by strongly opposing the proposition, delayed or frustrated union.

Public Meeting

The joint committee usually arranged for a public meeting at which the matter of union was thoroughly discussed. One church distributed a mimeographed outline of the main points to be discussed. The topics included the preservation of denominational integrity, the success of federation elsewhere, the purposes of federation, the democratic character

of a federated church, the right to withdraw, local autonomy, choice of minister, and the advantages that might be expected to result to the churches and to the community.

Several mass meetings sometimes proved necessary. From the meeting or meetings there resulted, first, an informal agreement that union was desirable, often expressed by a show of hands; secondly, the appointment of a joint committee, or the confirmation of one already chosen, to make arrangements and to draw up articles of agreement.

Constitution

Unless the denominational officials of the area had cooperated in preparing a standard form of agreement, or unless the form of union was of the strictly denominational type and the denomination had for its churches a standardized form of government so that no constitution had to be prepared, a local joint committee had the responsibility of preparing a constitution for the united church. When possible they obtained constitutions of other united churches; and then either adapted these to local needs or, after considering them, drafted one of their own.

Decision Regarding Union

The joint committee also took the initiative in calling church meetings and in presenting recommendations to the churches.

The final decision regarding union was made by the churches as separate units, each of which called meetings in due form and put the matter to vote. Sometimes the immediate decision was to enter upon a period of experimental coöperation, during which the churches sought to learn to know each other and to act together, and experimented in practical methods of conducting their joint affairs. More frequently formal union of some sort was adopted at once, whether for a trial period or unconditionally.

Chapter VIII

ORGANIZATION

Half the united churches of the denominational type that were listed belonged to denominations having a highly standardized form of local-church government. Because the structure of such churches is generally understood, and because denominational supervision is available when starting or extending them, their polity need not be described here.

The organization of loosely knit federated churches, however, presented peculiar features resulting from their dual or triple structure. These will be explained in the early part of the present chapter.

The forms of organization of all other kinds of united churches were found to exhibit general agreement. The individual churches were far from being alike in structure; yet there were no details of organization peculiar to any type of united church. The main outlines of organization could all be paralleled in the structure of strictly denominational churches. There were found, however, adjustments to the new conditions in certain matters of detail. Moreover, the organization of united churches of the kinds now under consideration was generally planned or modified by lay leaders unfamiliar with traditional forms of church government and who frequently acted without advice either from ministers or from denominational superintendents. The latter part of this chapter will explain certain principles that governed these leaders in planning the organization of their churches, and will describe the forms they devised.

Organization of Federated Churches

INFORMAL PARTNERSHIPS

Federated churches were not all formally organized at the beginning. Where different kinds of religious groups had been separately organized in the local community, as was naturally the case whenever the form of union proposed was federation, people were unusually reluctant to enter into unions. For this reason a form of association that could not be abandoned at any moment seemed to the people of many communities as alarming as a trap. This difficulty was recognized by district superintendents in favor of federation. One of these men said that although a formal and closely knit federation was more likely to endure, an informal arrangement was often easier to bring about; and that a loose association after a period of growing mutual acquaintance frequently resulted in the adoption of a closer relationship. Another denominational superintendent explained the same reluctance in a somewhat different way through the following anecdote: When Lyman Abbott, being about to preach in Appleton Chapel at Harvard University, was asked if he would wear a gown, his reply was: "If it is optional, I will; if it is compulsory, I won't."

Informal partnerships took several forms. According to one arrangement, each of the coöperating churches raised its own share of the money required, and conducted its separate affairs, though the services were held in the respective buildings in turn. This plan provided for no joint executive committee; and usually, but not invariably, it was not outlined in formal articles. By a second and more common plan, a definite agreement embodied in articles and involving a joint committee was adopted for a fixed temporary period. The trial term was frequently one year; but in certain cases it was two, three, five or even six years.

Some churches made provision that the partnership should terminate automatically at the end of the trial period unless definite action should be taken to continue it. Other churches arranged that the federation should continue unless

the issue was brought up and decided. Some voted at the end of the trial term to continue for another trial term. One early federation took such a vote every year for over fifteen years, the action soon becoming perfunctory. Still other federated churches, after the first experimental period expired, voted to make the federation permanent.

DENOMINATIONAL VERSUS FEDERATED MACHINERY

When two or more churches federated, it was the regular agreement that each should retain its entity and its denominational relations. Frequently the separate units kept up their meetings for a time, and local denominational machinery continued to run. In general, however, denominational activities tended to lapse. After this had happened for a certain federation of Methodist and Presbyterian churches, the overhead denominational authorities caused the session and the advisory board to be restored. The result was a complicated organization consisting of a board of trustees for the federated church, which conducted the common business; a pastor's advisory committee for the federated church, with oversight of spiritual matters and power to advise in any matters requiring haste; and in addition to these, the Presbyterian session and the Methodist advisory board. This kind of complicated organization did not remain in active operation for any great length of time except in very few cases. Local business was transacted through a joint board or through two or more joint boards, and the denominational machinery became inactive, although the organization of the denominational units remained in existence to hold property and to maintain relationships with the denominational overhead bodies. Dormant denominational churches were also found in connection with a number of undenominational churches.

JOINT COMMITTEE

The agency through which federated churches carried on their common activities was frequently composed of repre-

sentatives of the two or more units combined. These representatives were chosen in several different ways. For some churches they consisted of the same number of officers from each of the denominational units. For other churches, they were chosen, not by the members of the churches federating, but by the official boards. For others, they were elected by the congregation of the federated church as a whole; but were selected to give the different units equal representation. Whatever the method, it was sometimes the case that representation in the governing boards, instead of being equal for the units, was in proportion to membership. A number of federated churches having a large undenominational membership list provided for the representation of such members on the executive board. Some federated churches from the beginning, and a good many after amalgamation had taken place, selected their representatives entirely for fitness without regard to the denomination of the candidates.

Such a board sometimes carried out the expressed will of the federated church; on the other hand, it sometimes also decided for the church what should be done. The constitutions of a few federated churches, however, provided that any action of the joint board could be vetoed by either unit; and one such church provided that, upon the request of either unit, a vote of the federated church must be ratified by both units.

CONSTITUTION

Points of organization peculiar to federated churches were usually made clear in a formal "constitution" or set of "articles of agreement." These documents consisted of articles on such topics as these: purpose in federating; denominational integrity of units; joint committee; membership; officers; annual meeting; ratification; provision for withdrawal; and amendments. Other topics frequently discussed were place of worship, creed, sacraments, and auxiliary organizations. The attempt was made to settle in the constitution any points that if left open might occasion dispute.

LEADERSHIP FROM ONE DENOMINATION

There were found in Vermont a considerable number of federated churches with a peculiar form of organization. The strong church among two or three in the same community, at the suggestion of denominational superintendents acting in coöperation, sent to the other church or churches of the community a formal invitation to coöperate with it in its activities. If this invitation was accepted, the strong church kept its organization, and all ministers were of its denomination; while the weaker partner or partners had a fixed representation among officials and on committees, and preserved denominational entity, overhead relations and title to property.

Organization of United Churches in General

Except for the particulars set forth in the foregoing sections, the organization of federated churches was similar to that of other kinds of united churches, with the exception of those belonging to standardized denominations. The common features of organization will be the theme of the rest of this chapter.

AUTONOMY

United churches of the undenominational type were naturally independent of dictation from denominational overhead bodies. Independence in local affairs was found to exist in a lesser degree for most united churches of all the other types. Autonomy on such matters is of the very nature of affiliated churches. One church of this type expressed its sense of independence in this sentence from its constitution: "The Community Church as a whole shall conduct its affairs without outside interference." Federated churches, though technically connected with overhead bodies, yet proved, especially in areas where there was no interdenominational understanding concerning them, to be less closely supervised than churches of a single denomination. One

reason for this was that many district superintendents hesitated to exercise authority lest they conflict with one another. Moreover, many federated churches gradually developed, along with the growing sense of unity, a disregard of denominational distinctions and affiliations. This attitude was fostered for many federated churches by the existence of an undenominational list of members. Many united churches even of the denominational type, felt an unusual degree of local independence.

NON-MEMBER CONSTITUENCY

The non-member constituency reached by many united churches was afforded a voice in church management through several distinct methods. One of these was the parish or society of New England Congregationalism, still normally in force in occasional denominational churches in New England. By some united churches it was called the parish or the congregation; by others the civil organization; or, where the church was incorporated, the incorporation. This larger constituency of the church, including church-members and the non-member supporters, attended to all material affairs, held and administered property, handled financial matters, hired the minister, and the like. Persons belonging to the parish but not to the church were allowed to vote on matters affecting the community; and by many united churches they were admitted to some official positions.

Where there was no distinct organization of this kind, a similar result was secured in many cases through associate membership; the associate members—who included those persons not church-members who would naturally ally themselves with the church—being allowed a vote on many matters in recognition of their financial support and their service of other kinds. Other united churches, instead of using the term "associate membership," extended limited voting privileges to "supporters" as well as to members. At least one united church, while allowing a vote to all supporters, refused the voting privilege even to members who were not contributors.

A considerable number of united churches made provision for the holding of office by persons that were not members. Many elected such persons trustees, members of the financial committee, and even members of the executive board. A few restricted the number of non-members that could be elected to a given group.

DEMOCRATIC VERSUS REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Some of the local churches combining to form united churches had belonged to denominations that allowed all members equal voice in church affairs. Others had been of denominations providing that the church business should be performed through a session or other delegated group. That is, there were in the melting pot churches with a democratic form of government and others with a representative polity. One of the oldest federated churches, recently reorganized, clearly indicated its choice of a democratic government in these words from the new constitution:

> The government of this church is vested in its members and regular supporters, who exercise the right of control in all its affairs.

Most of the united churches with this kind of government had an executive board of some sort through which they acted. A typical situation was clearly expressed in the following extract from the constitution of an undenominational church:

> The membership . . . shall constitute the final authority for settling all questions that may arise as to the policy and work of the church, but in the hands of an official board composed of nine members of the church shall be vested the authority for carrying out the expressed wishes of the membership and for transacting all business.

Some churches provided that this executive committee should introduce all business considered by the church. A certain constitution expressed this arrangement as follows:

> . . . A Cabinet shall consider all questions of public importance and make a recommendation on same to the church before being acted upon by the church. The church is under no obligations, however, to accept the recommendations of the Cabinet.

A form of articles extensively used was that of the Massachusetts Federation of Churches, which had the distinction of being the only state federation officially sponsoring churches of any form of union other than the denominational type. These articles stated:

> The joint committee shall have the management of all business affairs, subject to the advice and approval of the constituent churches.

That the expression "advice and approval" implied full control is shown by this further quotation from the same form:

> So far as the polity or discipline of the constituent Churches permits, the members of the Federated Church shall decide all questions of work and worship.

Some united churches authorized the executive board to act for the church in minor matters. To a provision of this kind, a certain church added:

> But all such matters must be referred to the church on request of any one member of the committee.

In contrast to these united churches of the congregational type, other united churches had a representative form of government. The authority deputed to the board of control of a certain federated church is defined as follows:

> The Board of Control shall have jurisdiction over all questions that shall concern the coöperative congregations, except those of a strictly denominational character. Its acts shall be binding upon the Association. . . . All money . . . shall be collected under the direction of the Board of Control. . . . Sacrament shall be administered as the Board of Control shall determine. . . . The minister shall be chosen and his salary determined by the Board of Control, subject to ratification by the associated churches.

In one church the executive committee was allotted more authority than the minister. The constitution read:

> The Cabinet shall have financial, social, and religious activities under its direct supervision. . . . Both the congregation and the pastor are under moral obligations to be loyal to the leadership of the Cabinet.

The executive board was usually authorized to appoint its own officers, and to organize committees responsible for specified tasks. Sometimes it was empowered to make regulations governing not only its own actions but those of the church. In not a few cases it was given discretionary power to undertake duties not specifically entrusted to it. For example, by one constitution it was granted "such other powers and duties as it may appropriately assume in harmony with the spirit and letter of this constitution."

Certain churches with a representative form of government provided methods for checking the powers delegated to the cabinet. Some churches provided that any member might attend the meetings of the executive board. Others made constitutional provision for referring any action of the board to a vote of the church itself.

The democratic form of government predominated among the united churches of New England, where it was traditional and was still common in denominational churches. Even there, however, there were found united churches governed through representatives. Over the rest of the country both forms were found; but the representative form seemed to be more common, especially for federated churches.

The form of church government was usually not thought out beforehand, but developed gradually. Some united churches started with a government of one of the two types, and gradually drifted toward the other. Several federations, both units of which represented denominations congregational in polity, were governed through representatives. A number of churches or church councils worked out institutions and practices for the local church by the method of trial and error, embodying them in a revised constitution only when they had been thoroughly tested by experience.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY

Name

The boards conducting the affairs of united churches had a great variety of titles, such as "executive committee,"

"governing board," "church cabinet," and the like. This variety of titles, and especially the secular nature of some of the terms employed, "board of directors," for example, illustrate the local origin of the forms of government, the freshness of attack, and the non-ecclesiastical, business leadership.

Number of Members

The size of these executive committees varied from five members to twenty, the numbers most frequently found ranging from nine to twelve. One church, finding its board inconveniently large, added a smaller committee, the members chosen by the pastor from each denominational unit to serve in general in an advisory capacity, but empowered to act in matters requiring haste.

Methods of Selection

The members of the board were sometimes such by virtue of their position as church officers, chairmen of committees, or heads of auxiliary organizations. In other cases they were elected by the church. These two methods were sometimes combined, as for example where, in addition to its members *ex officio,* the board included three members at large, elected by one united church from the members of the church, and by another from among non-members. Occasionally the provision was made that the board itself might elect additional members. Vacancies in the board were filled sometimes by the church and sometimes by the board.

It was not infrequently provided that the members of the board should come from the different denominations represented. For example, a church with a board of trustees of eleven members provided that each denomination represented in the church, which was undenominational, should be represented by at least one member and by not more than three. The undenominational membership of some federated churches was given representation on the boards. The desire to give a fair representation to different denomina-

tional elements, however, was by some united churches gradually forgotten as amalgamation progressed; and the one idea in choosing executives came to be the selection of those best adapted for each task. Presbyterian members of the board of a certain federated church happened to be replaced in two instances by Methodists.

Certain churches made formal provision for the election of women members to the committee. More than one church provided that representation should be equally divided between the sexes. Few, if any, united churches were guided wholly by men. The minister was frequently a member of the governing body. Some churches made him chairman; but other churches on the contrary provided that he should be only an advisory member without a vote.

Length of Service

For some united churches the members of the governing board were elected annually. Others had a term of two or of three years, in which case groups of members were elected in rotation. A considerable number of united churches regularly reëlected most or all of their representatives; in some cases virtually the same board had been in office ever since union. Others, out of the desire to train new leaders and to afford an opportunity for service to a larger number of persons, arranged that the same man should not serve more than two terms in succession, or in some instances should serve only one term. A certain board of ten members to whom was assigned the duty of nominating twenty candidates for members of the board for the ensuing year, on the first occasion included their own names, because they felt that at that stage the policy should be continuous. All were reëlected. The following year, believing that the time was come to enlist new leaders, they included among the candidates the names of only half their own number, the choice being determined by lot. The five were all reëlected.

Chairman

Some constitutions provided that the chairman of the governing body should be the minister; others, that this office should be held by a layman. If a layman, the chairman was sometimes elected by the church and sometimes by the board itself. The titles used included chairman, moderator, and president. The chairman of this committee sometimes served also as moderator for church meetings.

Frequency of Meetings

Provision was sometimes made that the board should meet quarterly. In other cases it was arranged that it should be called together when occasion should arise. Many such boards met once a month, having apparently plenty to do; and in general they applied themselves to their work with regularity and energy.

SPECIALIZATION

Up to this point it has been taken for granted that the administrative power was vested in a single, unified group. This was true for the great majority of united churches. But a considerable number of churches, representing the four types of union, distributed responsibility among two or more committees. Some assigned to one group the charge of spiritual matters and to a second the care of property and business affairs. Others had three boards, perhaps dividing between two of them the responsibility for property and for finances. Others added one or more departments to take charge of such matters as benevolences, religious education, social affairs, music, missions, and so on. For some churches these agencies acted independently of one another.

COÖRDINATION

Other churches, however, coördinated all such agencies by putting them under the direction of a single board. One

method by which this was accomplished was to include in the main board the chairmen of committees or departments. Another was to provide that the general board should be made up of lesser boards appointed by the church. According to a third method, the main board appointed committees, sometimes made up entirely of its own members and sometimes including others.

The Sunday school, the young people's society, the women's organizations, and any other auxiliaries of the church were afforded supervision in several different ways. Some constitutions provided that the heads of such organizations should be *ex officio* members of the board; others made the arrangement that the auxiliaries should be under the supervision of the board, sometimes providing also that the board should either elect the Sunday-school superintendent or should ratify the election of all officers of auxiliaries. The auxiliaries of some churches were expected to make an annual report to the board; and those of others could adopt rules only with the approval of the governing council.

OFFICERS

United churches proved to have the usual church officers. These officers were elected either by the members of the church at an annual meeting, or by the governing board, or some officers by one method and some by the other. Where officers were chosen by the church, it was not uncommon for provision to be made for a nominating committee, usually named by the governing board but sometimes by a subordinate board such as a board of trustees.

A certain undenominational church provided for the dismissal of an officer "who refuses or neglects to attend to the duties of his office, or whose irregularity at services or committee meetings of the church renders his service and influence deficient, except in case of sickness or like reasonable cause."

The duties assigned to officers, though commonly the

standard tasks, were sometimes unusual. A certain church, for example, provided that the duties of deacons should be, in addition to the distribution of the elements at the Lord's Supper, to act as ushers and to solicit funds under the direction of the executive committee. The same church provided for six deaconesses, whose duties were to be the "care of the Lord's table . . . supervision of the housekeeping of the Lord's house," and "the ministry of the poor and unfortunate . . . the sick and afflicted."

As in respect to the members of the official board, a provision was frequently made that church officers should have a limited tenure of office. An undenominational church had reëlected the four deacons so many times that they were virtually in office for life. Two additional deacons were provided for and the minister was asked to tell each new appointee that after his three-year term he was expected to refuse reëlection. Another church provided that no officer should be reëlected till after the lapse of one year, except by a three-fourth's vote.

CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION

The fact that the movement towards the union of local churches is new, and that consequently fitting forms of organization have not yet been developed and standardized, has often brought it about that arrangements originally adopted proved undesirable and were afterwards changed. Sometimes a change of practice was made in direct opposition to provisions of the constitution. Sometimes the constitution was amended or replaced. Of the eighty-three united churches surveyed in the field, fifteen had reorganized their church government, either remodeling the constitution radically or making an entirely new one. The process of experiment still continued.

Summary

Though the main outlines of the organization of united churches were not radically new, it was found that the

leaders of united churches had made many experiments in details of government.

Because many of the church leaders were business men, the forms of government and the methods of work tended to be unusually secular and practical.

There were often in evidence one or both of two complementary tendencies; a tendency to delegate to different groups responsibility for various phases of church activity; and a tendency to coördinate all such groups under a single supervisory board.

Both the democratic and the representative forms of government were represented by many united churches, the representative form being more common, especially among federated churches outside New England.

Changes in form of organization had been frequent and were still in process.

Chapter IX

BASIS OF MEMBERSHIP

The harmonizing of conflicting requirements for membership presented one of the most difficult problems faced by newly organized united churches. For centuries churches of almost all denominations have required of candidates for admission the acceptance of certain theological dogmas; and churches of certain denominations have made obligatory a specified form of baptism. The amount of doctrine required, to be sure, has not been so great as is sometimes believed: to become a member of a Presbyterian Church, for example, it is not obligatory to subscribe to the Westminster Catechism, with its articles on "effectual calling," "predestination," and "saving faith"; and to be confirmed in the Episcopal Church, it is not necessary to assent to the thirty-nine articles. Moreover, doctrinal requirements are on the decrease. In 1924, for example, the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church did away entirely with the doctrinal test for admission to membership.

Yet it remains true that rites inconsistent with one another are required of new members by even the denominations whose local churches are often found combined in organic unions. A Unitarian and a trinitarian Congregational church desiring to federate, for example, faced the difference in their respective beliefs concerning the personality of Christ. An equally puzzling situation was encountered when a church of Disciples, to which baptism through immersion was of paramount importance, considered union with an organization of Methodists unwilling to cast discredit on their own and their parents' baptism, which was of course by sprinkling. These are but two examples of numerous and very real difficulties. Moreover, the problem was not limited to harmonizing the doctrines and the rites

of the comparatively few denominations whose local churches formed organic combinations. Churches of all types of union enlisted in membership individuals from a large range of religious faiths; and united churches usually also made a distinct effort to enlist persons of no denominational adherence. To assimilate recruits of diverse denominational origins and those outside all denominations, required not only the spirit of tolerance and of compromise, but the skillful adjustment of technical requirements.

In meeting this serious problem, united churches showed certain peculiar advantages over denominational churches of the usual variety. In the first place, the fact that a church was a united church at all implied a reduced sense of theological distinctions and the presence to a certain extent of the spirit of unity. United churches also laid their emphasis differently from ordinary churches. To them the religious interests of the local community bulked larger than allegiance to any denomination; and they ascribed greater importance to brotherhood, to service, and to the social gospel, than to intellectual assent to theological doctrines. The leaders of united churches, moreover, being often laymen from the world of business or from secular professions, attributed more importance than do most church leaders to practical considerations. For all these reasons, united churches in determining requirements for membership were not endeavoring to keep people out but to take in as many as possible.

In so doing, they experienced one peculiar difficulty. Their membership almost invariably included conservative persons with so strong a sense of the preëminent worth of their own doctrines or practices that they conscientiously struggled to impose them upon all others. This element in the situation rendered particularly important in the initial stages wisdom and tact on the part of leaders, both ministers and laymen.

Principles

The practical methods in use are based upon four different principles, as follows:

First, Option. Theological beliefs and the form of baptism, especially the latter, were frequently left to the conscience of the individual.

Secondly, Vagueness. The statement of faith was sometimes purposely expressed in language so vague or so comprehensive that it could be interpreted according to the convictions of the individual.

Thirdly, Elimination. The creed was occasionally limited to those points about which the local people were in practical agreement.

Finally, Essentiality. Some united churches endeavored to ignore what the members regarded as superficial differences, and to have regard only for what seemed to them the essential verities held in common by all Christians.

These principles were applied either singly or in combination. The methods by which they were applied were frequently embodied by the churches in their constitutions, their creeds, or their covenants. Some of the methods were used only by churches of one type of union, while others were common to many united churches without regard to type. The methods of both kinds will be presented here largely through typical extracts from the official church documents.

Methods Peculiar to Certain Types

METHODS OF UNDENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

A method employed by a considerable number of undenominational churches was the acceptance of existing membership in denominational churches. The provision in one constitution read:

> The membership shall be open to all who are now identified with any of the existing denominations, without in any way interfering with present church affiliations.

Such an arrangement for plural membership was common. Another church exacted "bona fide membership in one of the twenty-six . . . evangelical denominations cooperating with the Home Missions Council" of the district

in question. The restriction to evangelical denominations was not infrequent. Applicants not already members were sometimes required to be, to quote from one constitution:

> Received into some Protestant evangelical church, or . . . baptized by some regularly ordained minister of a Protestant evangelical church. In other words, as this is a federated church of all denominations, we entrust all those converts made in our services to be first received by the denominational church of their choice; or, if there is no preference, that they be first baptized by some regularly ordained minister of a Protestant evangelical church.

A similar provision was the following:

> Applicants who are not already members of another church may become members of this church by answering satisfactorily the regular questions usually asked by the denomination of the applicant's choice.

METHODS OF FEDERATED CHURCHES

Many loosely-knit federated churches, instead of having a single method of receiving members to the united church, provided that each unit should receive its own members according to the regular denominational procedure. Federated churches using this method sometimes experienced the difficulty that although newcomers preferring one or another of the denominations represented readily joined such denominational units, those of any other denomination and also those without a preference, in uncertainty as to which unit to choose, often failed to ally themselves with either. For this reason, among others, many federated churches adopted an undenominational membership roll. Reorganized federated churches and many federated churches that had from the beginning a closer form of union, used a combined roll for the federated church as a whole. To churches of this last kind and also to the undenominational membership list of other federated churches, applies what will be said later in this chapter concerning united churches without regard to type.

METHODS OF DENOMINATIONAL UNITED CHURCHES

Denominational united churches of denominations with a standardized form of local-church government had certain peculiar methods of facilitating the reception of members from other denominations. One of these methods consisted of associate membership, of which an account was given in the chapter on this type of united churches. This form of membership, however, as has been shown, was found to be less prevalent than was frequently supposed. A large majority of denominational united churches received individuals from other denominations to full membership. To win such persons they emphasized the parts of their creeds belonging to the common heritage of all Christians. Where strict adherence to the letter of denominational rules would have tended to keep out recruits, they sometimes modified or ignored denominational regulations. This policy was illustrated by the practice of a minister of a consolidated church allied with the Reformed Church in the United States. One of the questions in the reception service of that denomination asks whether the candidate accepts the Heidelburg Confession. As this historic document, which consists of 129 questions grouped in ten lessons, was quite unfamiliar to many of the prospective members, the minister omitted this question altogether. Ministers confessing such liberties justified their action by declaring or implying that their denomination had become penetrated by a spirit of tolerance not as yet embodied in accepted usages.

Methods Used by All Types

The methods of harmonizing divergent denominational practices concerning the reception of members that remain to be considered are employed indiscriminately by many united churches of all types except denominational united churches connected with bodies of highly centralized polity, and federated churches leaving the matter in the hands of their respective units.

One of the most common methods was to require accept-

ance of the Apostles' Creed. This creed was adopted by a certain united church as the standard of belief in these words from its constitution:

> We declare our union in faith and love with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ . . . and accept the Creed known in history as the Apostles' Creed as the doctrinal basis of our union.

The creed followed. Some churches adopted a shortened or slightly modified form of this creed.

For the use of the Apostles' Creed, reasons were often given. In the first place, it is time-honored and well known, having been used for centuries in the early church as a baptismal test, and still is the official creed of many denominations and of numerous local churches free by their polity to choose their own statement of belief. To many of those responsible for the conditions of membership of united churches, this document summarized the essential beliefs of Christianity. Secondly, it has become not unusual to interpret the language of this creed figuratively. A Universalist member of a committee on articles expressed herself as willing to accept this creed, which she said was "all right if you don't take it literally." This conception of the Apostles' Creed as a poetical expression of truth appeared to be not uncommon among leaders of united churches.

Not every united church adopted a definite creed. Some purposely phrased the matter in vague, general terms, as here:

> We believe in the fundamental principles of the Christian Faith as held and taught by Protestant Christianity.

Another church added:

> We insist, however, that this belief shall be evangelical, and consonant with the creeds of the major Protestant Churches.

The formulas frequently included echoes of denominational baptismal and reception services. "We will not debar from our membership any who truly desire 'to flee from the wrath to come,'" suggests such an origin; as does "Do you renounce the devil and all his works?" and "Is it your will

to be baptized in this faith?" Such echoes emphasize the fact that the developing creeds of united churches were rooted in the faith of the past, as does the presence in some formulas of such petrified phrases as "merits and mediation," and "the same in substance, equal in power and glory." Phrases of this kind were more often found in statements of belief adapted from older creeds, and in statements prepared by ministers.

The Bible was very generally accepted as the standard of belief and conduct, being sometimes stated to be "the basis of religious belief and obligation," and sometimes "the rule of our faith and practice." In some cases the standard thus adopted was the New Testament.

Other statements of belief showed independent efforts to express the essence of Christianity in forms of words that might be acceptable to all local elements. One church declared, "Love to God and good will to men shall be our bond of union." This particular church, however, added to this announcement a short creed. Inconsistencies of this kind, which proved to be not uncommon, are explicable as resulting either from compromise or from a natural failure to attain sharp thinking in a very difficult field. Two or three churches at least adopted as their standard the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." By one church this form was used in combination with other tests. Another church, which had adopted this formula at organization, changed it afterwards, on the ground that it was ethical rather than distinctly Christian. After the change only two persons withdrew, and one of these was thought to have been influenced by motives not exclusively connected with the circumstance. Another formula found in use, although not as a sole standard, was the Golden Rule. Still another was this:

> As a church we believe in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Saviourhood of Christ, and the Sacrificial Life of Service.

More than one united church used Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

This last formula illustrates a frequent tendency to focus the statement of belief, sometimes in connection with other doctrines, sometimes in emphatic isolation, on belief in and discipleship toward Jesus Christ. One statement made "the basis of union for work and worship . . . simply the teachings of Jesus Christ," and used this form:

> I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the saviour of men. Accepting Him as my Saviour I promise to obey Him in all things according to the measure of my knowledge of His will.

The entire statement of "Qualifications for Membership" of another church is this:

> This church will welcome into its membership any person who loves the Lord Jesus Christ and who purposes to live according to His law of love.

Both these statements resembled many others in stressing not doctrines about Jesus, but the attempt to do His will. The "Ideals and Doctrines" of a certain church expresses this attitude as follows:

> Members are expected to live earnest Christian lives, emphasis being placed upon discipleship of Jesus Christ rather than upon theological tenets and opinions.

A test frequently applied was similarity of purpose, as in the following extract from a constitution:

> Independence in thinking but community in purpose is encouraged.

Another constitution declared:

> All persons who are in sympathy with the character and purpose of this church are cordially welcome to its fellowship.

Among common objects of endeavor one sometimes given specific mention was the welfare of the local church. "As members of this church," said one covenant, "we promise, with God's help, to try to keep peace, unity, and good fellowship in that body."

Another was the service of the community. A certain "Statement of Association" concluded:

> We believe in loving one another, and in helping one another, so that the prayer "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" may be answered in our community life.

The "Bond of Fellowship" of another church declared:

> We accept the religion of love and service which Jesus lived and taught and declare it our purpose to do the will of God in all things and to make the Christ spirit dominant in our lives and in all the relations of men to each other.

A similar position was expressed as follows:

> Its aim shall not be uniformity of belief, but identity of purpose. That purpose shall be to make God, the Father, a reality among men. It shall seek to fulfill this purpose through the improvement of the spiritual, mental, social, and physical condition of all the people in this community.

Another common purpose sometimes mentioned was the advancement of Christianity in the world at large. In the words of one covenant:

> We consecrate ourselves and all that we have, as we understand God would have us use it, for the upbuilding of His Kingdom world-wide.

Many united churches left the door wide open for the honest doubter. Not only was doctrine often rejected as a test of fitness for membership, but the right of private judgment was upheld by church after church. Some confessions provided for future change of opinion, using the time-honored expression "made known or to be made known unto you." After the articles of faith of a certain church came this qualification:

> The acceptance of any creedal statements of religion is vain unless such acceptance manifests itself in rising moral standards, wider and more loving human fellowship and closer unity with God.

The attitude of tolerance was expressed in the following sentence from a form of reception, coming immediately after

the recitation of the "Confession of Faith" of the church in question:

> Without requiring of you a complete understanding of these things, we accept you, as sufficiently in accord with such faith as to coöperate efficiently with us in work and worship, and we do earnestly commend you to search the Scriptures to learn whether these things are so. Will you do so?

None of these attempts at formulating a basis of membership were considered final and satisfactory: on the contrary, the leaders of the churches that used them described themselves as groping and experimenting. Although many such leaders minimized the importance of any intellectual expression of belief, others, especially among the ministers, considered this to be highly important, first, as an aid to clearness of thought for individuals; secondly, as a weapon in times of personal doubt or depression and when suddenly consulted or assailed; and finally, as a battle-standard in the warfare of the Church. Yet, desirable as many considered an adequate statement of the genuine common convictions of the Christian Church to-day, they had not been able to formulate such a creed; and many of them felt that such an achievement was impossible at the existing stage of scientific and religious thought.

In spite of the acknowledged inadequacy of the various provisions concerning the reception of members, through these methods united churches had nevertheless succeeded in conveying their vision of the essential unity of Christianity; for they had drawn into their membership Christians of the most diverse affiliations, including, as will hereafter be shown, fully fifty denominations.[1] It was not at all an uncommon thing for a united church to have as many as six diverse elements; sometimes there were twenty or even twenty-four; and persons received on one occasion represented as many as eight different persuasions.

[1] See page 226.

Chapter X

SERVICES OF WORSHIP

The differences discovered between services of worship of united churches and those of churches in general resulted from compromise respecting denominational usages of the elements combining, on the one hand; and, on the other, from changed conditions such as larger constituency, increased resources, and better ministerial service. These two kinds of factors sometimes operated separately, but were usually found in combination. The differences prevailed among most united churches of all types; and they appeared in each of the usual kinds of services: namely, Sunday preaching services, other Sunday services, mid-week meetings, communion, baptism, services for the reception of members, and special services. The present chapter will show how the two kinds of special factors tended to modify each of these kinds of services.

Sunday Preaching Services

Though the forms of worship in use at preaching services by those denominations whose churches had entered into unions presented many points of agreement, they involved contrasting usages in many matters of detail. For example, certain denominations made the recital of the creed a regular part of their service, while others had no such custom; and some employed the word "debts" in the Lord's Prayer where others used the word "trespasses."

The adjustment of such differences was sometimes left to the minister, in which case it often altered with a change of pastorate. In other instances, each problem was decided by the church as a body or by the governing board. Contrasting practices were sometimes employed in alternation. A federation of Methodist and Congregational units, for ex-

ample, which used the two church buildings alternately, followed the Methodist form of service when meeting in the Methodist church and the Congregational form whenever service was held in the Congregational building.

A more common method of adjustment was the uniform use of one or another of contrasting practices, and this course was usually taken whenever one of the alternative usages was more acceptable than the other to the majority. For example, a union of Baptist, Congregational, and Methodist churches decided to adopt the word "debts" because it was in habitual use by the Baptists and the Congregationalists. Again, after a certain Methodist church had been merged in a church of the German Reformed denomination, a question arose concerning posture during prayer. The people of the Reformed church had been accustomed to stand; the Methodists to kneel. As the Reformed people would have been very uncomfortable if requested to kneel, the practice of standing was made uniform, being adopted the more readily because the Methodists had attended the Reformed services before the consolidation.

When concessions were made, they were often reciprocal. If the creed was omitted to please one group, the invocation was left out to suit another element. The familiarity of parts of the audience with different forms of worship was utilized by some ministers to vary and enrich the services.

The amount of ritual acceptable to different churches was found to vary greatly. Some united churches used with appreciation, either occasionally or regularly, such forms as the Venite and the Gloria Patri. But other churches, especially those having in their congregations a large proportion of persons without church-going traditions, preferred a service unusually devoid of such traditional forms. The minister of a church of this kind said:

"Some of the people are like the Puritans and the Quakers when they reacted from the Catholic Church. Twice I have mentioned ritual. There was more objection to that than to anything else I've said. They don't want anything like the Episcopal service."

HYMN BOOKS

Churches arising from the union of previously existing organizations usually inherited two or more sets of hymn books. At the outset both were sometimes employed. This often happened naturally when two or more buildings were used in alternation. Under other circumstances, two kinds of hymn books were employed at the same service, the numbers corresponding to the hymns in each of the books being announced. The inconvenience of this practice and the fact that it acted as a reminder of divided origins, often led to a selection between the books. When one of the elements had a hymn book acceptable to the other, and the copies were in good condition, this book was frequently adopted, additional copies being acquired if needed. The use of a denominational hymnal caused so little comment in one united church that after several years the denominational labels were still affixed. Not infrequently the hymn books of one denomination were used at the principal service, and those of a different denomination on other occasions.

The theology of hymns was not found disturbing. A united church that included Unitarians was heard singing on the same Sunday "Holy, holy, holy," and "My faith looks up to Thee." The minister of a church similarly constituted said that the only thing about the hymns his Unitarians objected to was the term "Holy Ghost," the word ghost having for them only associations other than sacred. A special problem arose when one of the elements was United Presbyterian, since this denomination sings metrical versions of the psalms instead of modern hymns. When a certain United Presbyterian church combined with two other groups to form a united church, the majority voted at the suggestion of a leading Baptist to use the psalm book for the morning service, a hymn book being used for other occasions. An aged United Presbyterian contributed the money for the additional copies of the psalm book required. Other united churches adopted interdenominational hymn books.

THE CHOIR

United churches almost invariably had better choirs than those of churches of the usual kind in communities similar in size and environment. Churches formed through the union of previously existing churches generally reported that their choirs were better than before union. More musical talent was available, more interest was taken, and in many cases more time was spent in practice. Another reason for the change was that money released from competitive expenditures was often applied to the purchase of music and to the salary of a paid organist or choir leader. As the musical education of the audience and the singers advanced, the choirs sometimes became larger; and in addition, in a few places, junior choirs composed of boys or of young girls were trained for occasional service. Some of the choirs wore vestments. Many united churches enjoyed superior music; and a few offered cantatas or other special features at church festivals. In a small number also voluntary singers had been replaced by a paid choir or quartette. Excellent singing and organ music helped to render the services of many united churches not only enjoyable but full of the spirit of worship.

PART TAKEN BY THE MINISTER

The larger salary paid by united churches [1] enabled many of them to engage as ministers men of more than ordinary ability and training. The sermon, therefore, the prayers, and all the details of the service, though showing great variation, ranked in general decidedly above the average. More will be said as to the minister in the chapter on leadership.

WORSHIP FOR CHILDREN

The presence of children of two or more denominational groups stimulated an unusual proportion of the ministers of united churches to provide services of worship especially

[1] See page 118.

adapted to youthful minds. The methods adopted were in line with those used in many strictly denominational churches.

SUNDAY EVENING SERVICES

Many united churches held evening meetings of the traditional kind, that is, exercises duplicating the morning service, only shorter, and possibly with music of a more popular character. Other churches, however, had found that in their environment evening meetings of this sort attracted only a small audience. Many had discontinued the evening service altogether or had surrendered the hour to the young people. Others used novel forms of service acceptable to their constituencies. A favorite form consisted of a vesper service, including considerable music which, in many cases, was more ritualistic than the service of the morning. Another experiment was a service of song, sometimes intended for the whole community. The care of the evening service for three months was entrusted by one united church to its young people, who not only manned a choir and an orchestra, but attended to the ushering, planned the program with some advice from their elders, and furnished the leaders.

Another united church held on Sunday evenings a series of lectures on religious subjects in the theater. Still another drew an average audience of about forty to a series of talks on creed. The differences of opinion among the members being strong enough to kindle interest, but not too violent to be safely expressed, these talks proved so popular that shorthand notes were taken of them, and copies were distributed to invalids. Several churches conducted forums in which, through open discussion, the people were led to apply to social problems the principles of Christianity. The forum of a certain united church, although no attempt was made to popularize it, had an attendance of from forty to fifty persons, all really interested, and most of them taking part in the discussions. Another forum elicited frank, lively, and acute debate.

Another united church organized a Sunday Night Club, which provided a varied program for the whole community, including lectures, forums, sacred concerts, and other special features.

A church in a college town presented every other Sunday night in a large moving picture theater a carefully chosen film of a moral or religious character. Before, between, and after the reels the audience of some 600, including many students and also a considerable number of people from the country, sang hymns with great enthusiasm.

The Mid-week Meeting

Many united-church leaders expressed dissatisfaction with the traditional mid-week prayer meeting. One schedule reported that the prayer meeting of that church was "very poor." The average attendance at the mid-week meeting as reported by 150 united churches was sixteen. Over half of 313 united churches reporting services through schedules had no mid-week service, and a few others held prayer meetings either only once a month, or just before communion, or during certain weeks of each year, or on rare occasions. A few were experimenting in various new forms of mid-week activities. Several held small meetings in private homes, three being conducted upon the same evening in the different neighborhoods of a certain wide parish. Another church had a cottage service every Friday morning.

An expedient that often proved more popular if the leader was competent, consisted of courses of study, usually related to some book or aspect of the Bible. Another plan was to reserve a fixed night in the week for the meetings of such groups of church workers as the governing board, the choir, and the Sunday-school teachers; the same evening being also utilized on occasion for church socials, suppers and other parish events. For not a few united churches, "Church night" included a succession of activities or meetings; and for certain others, several meetings of specialized groups were in session at a single hour. The women of one church provided a supper at which now one department, and now

another, combined social intercourse with church business. The rest of the program consisted of a general devotional hour followed by the sessions of various study groups, and by meetings of the Boy Scouts and of the Girl Scouts. The four periods into which were divided the two-hour session of another church were assigned respectively to devotions, to the consideration of some problem, to Bible study, and to a lesson from a consecutive course of serious study. At that place the interest in theological discussion was so great that after the two hours were over certain individuals often remained for another hour and a half.

The Communion Service

The first communion service after union was not infrequently an occasion somewhat dreaded. Where immersionists were among the elements, other groups had sometimes feared lest they might insist on immersion and close communion. But these fears proved unfounded. Baptists, to use words employed in reporting a typical instance, "voted for open communion without a flurry." If a few aged denominationalists absented themselves for a time, they usually became reconciled to the new order before very long.

Adjustments to conflicting usages were parallel to those relating to the preaching service. The minister was often allowed to use his own discretion; and he either employed the form familiar to himself, alternated the rituals of the denominations represented, or utilized an even wider range of forms. The usages of the denominations represented were frequently combined, for instance, where the provision was made that Methodists should go forward to the altar while Congregationalists were served by deacons in their seats. At one church making this provision it turned out that a few Congregationalists went forward with aged Methodist relatives, and a few Methodists preferred to remain in their pews. Several churches composed partly of Methodists partook of the elements in their pews, but employed the Methodist form of communion service.

The frequency of the communion service varied greatly.

The constitutions of united churches provided that the service should be celebrated bi-monthly, quarterly, or, in rare cases, monthly. A certain united church with a Disciples element celebrated communion every Sunday morning after the first hymn. The Disciples, to whom weekly communion was a matter of conscience, had made this a condition of uniting with the other churches; and the other group had yielded for the sake of achieving union. A woman of one of the other denominations made this comment: "I think it (the communion service) is more solemn if you do not have it so often. But there is no harm in it."

A few united churches, on the other hand, lay little or no emphasis on the communion service. This attitude is illustrated by the following extract from the revised constitution of a certain undenominational church:

> The question of the Lord's Supper . . . as well as that of Baptism shall be left to the conscience of the individual member, for the reason that any religious rites or observances performed under compulsion or custom and without understanding is unprofitable to the believer and displeasing to Him Who demands honesty and sincerity in all our acts of worship and service.

A strong Modernist element of another church objected to having communion during the regular hours of worship; and there the rite was rarely held. The constitution of another church made no provision for communion, so that a new non-resident minister, while trying to conduct the service, encountered serious obstacles.

The invitation to the table was of the most general character. The words used sometimes were, "All who love our Lord Jesus Christ." It was sometimes even expressly stated that those not church-members were not excluded. One minister said, "We neither invite nor reject. It is the Lord's table."

Baptism

When a united church combined denominational groups having conflicting practices as to baptism, a *modus vivendi*

was almost invariably made part of the preliminary agreement. It was usually provided either that the denominational usage of the various groups uniting should be observed by those preferring the denomination, or that the matter should be left to the choice of each individual. Sometimes it was even made optional whether or not the candidate received baptism in any form.

Combinations of immersionist elements and elements baptizing by sprinkling often speedily resulted not merely in the tolerant acceptance by both sides of the unfamiliar form of the rite, but even in a sympathetic appreciation of it. Babies and young children were sprinkled without comment in certain Baptist church buildings. When a group including both Congregationalists and Baptists was received into a certain federated church at a time of year when immersion was impracticable, the Baptists accepted a temporary baptism by sprinkling; and it seemed doubtful whether they would all desire that this be confirmed later by immersion. On the other hand, some persons that had already been sprinkled in non-immersion denominations asked for immersion when bringing letters to united churches practicing both forms of baptism. In connection with the outdoor baptismal service of a certain united church, persons whose traditional form of baptism had been sprinkling took a more active part in the preparations than did the Baptists and the Disciples.

A Baptist minister of a federated church, being officially debarred from baptizing infants, found the parents of one baby ready to accept instead a service of dedication, the mother remarking that she "did not care about the water."

Services of Reception

Except in the case of federated churches very loosely integrated, most united churches of all types were found to be alike in receiving members of all denominational origins at a service of the united church as a whole. The form of words used was usually the same, except that it was frequently—though not always—so modified as to conform to the requirements of the denominations concerned. When

Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian units were federated, the three usages had to be reconciled; for members are received into the Presbyterian church by the session, into the Baptist church by the church-members, and into the Methodist church by the minister. In a federated church composed of these three elements, the pastor, after baptizing those who had not already received the rite, asked the church council to stand and receive all the new members to the community church. Then he asked each applicant which of the three denominational churches he desired to join. After all had replied, turning to the Presbyterian session, seated near the council, he inquired, "Do you receive these members into the Presbyterian Church?" In reference to the Baptist group he asked, "Do you members of the Baptist Church receive these persons?" Addressing the Methodist applicants directly, he declared: "I, as the supply for the Methodist Church, receive you into that church."

Some of the forms of reception services were well adapted to inspire in those received, and in the united church as a whole, those attitudes of consecration and of brotherhood which, if appropriate to all Christian churches, were held especially important where diverse elements had united in such a great adventure as a united church was still felt to be.

Special Services

The function accepted by many united churches of serving the religious needs of their whole communities sometimes involved providing services for groups that by reason of language or of peculiar beliefs and rites could not be adequately ministered to through the general services.

FOR RACIAL GROUPS

An undenominational church in a community where there were many foreign factory operatives, provided for Hungarians a monthly service conducted in the Hungarian language by a Hungarian minister paid by the "union church." Some of these Hungarians, even including individuals that

could not understand English, also attended other services of this church; and fifteen persons of this nationality had become members. As a result of a similar friendly policy over a period of years, the resident membership of this church included over seventy of foreign birth, belonging to at least eight races, among them being eleven Finns, nineteen Swedes and more than twenty Italians.

FOR EPISCOPALIANS

For the benefit of Episcopalians in their congregations, a number of united churches had made arrangements for regular monthly communion services celebrated by Episcopal clergymen. One Congregational minister with many Episcopal parishioners was confirmed in the Episcopal Church so that he might more acceptably serve his Episcopal constituents as a lay reader.

EVANGELISTIC SERVICES

Some ministers adapted their methods of evangelism to the unlike preferences of diverse elements in their churches. The Presbyterian minister of a partly Methodist church, for example, gave his Methodists opportunities for public repentance and reconsecration; and the Methodist minister of a partly Presbyterian church provided for the Presbyterians small inquiry meetings at the close of the general evangelistic services.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES

United churches alone in their communities naturally assumed responsibility for such special services as those on Thanksgiving and Memorial Day. Even when not the sole churches in their respective communities, they received an unusual number of invitations to conduct the annual church services of lodges and various other organizations, such as the Masons, the Odd Fellows and the D.A.R. Many churches, moreover, held evening exercises adapted to inter-

est certain elements, such as high-school students, members of the Y.M.C.A. and of the Y.W.C.A.

Summary

The facts about the services of united churches presented in this chapter show that inconsistent usages did not prevent people of many denominations from holding worship in common. They also make it evident that the challenge of new opportunities, and the larger resources available—both in money, in talent, and in ritual—made possible to the people of united churches a wider range of experiences of worship than they had known before union.

Chapter XI

FINANCES AND PROPERTY

Finances

The average annual local expenditures of united churches, as has been said in a previous chapter, stood well above the corresponding averages for strictly denominational churches. This fact is not explained by the somewhat higher membership of united churches; for it has also been shown that the average local expenditure per member of united churches was also comparatively large, being for the denominational type of union, indeed, double any of the standard averages found in the investigations of the Institute of Social and Religious Research.

Furthermore, united churches expended in local church maintenance in 1923-24 a larger sum than the pairs or groups of denominational churches that united to form them had spent during the year before union. The gain in dollars for sixty-one federated churches was 8.5 per cent.; and the gain in per capita expenditures for the same churches was 8.1 per cent.

Local leaders who had been active in raising funds for their churches reported in place after place that they found their work far easier after union. In one community where before union two churches had raised locally $1,000 to be divided between a superannuated minister and a part-time minister, both of whose salaries were supplemented by home-mission aid, it was found surprisingly easy after union to pay one full-time man $2,000 with no aid from home-mission boards, although times were much harder. A consolidated church that before union had received home-mission aid, continued to receive the same amount during its first year as a combined body. The second year the aid

was only half as much; and the third year, though money was offered and even sent, it was returned to the board.

For this greater facility in meeting the local budget there were several reasons. In the first place, a united church was a challenging enterprise. People felt that they were starting a new thing, and that they were among the pioneers in what they believed would prove a great movement. They had large plans, moreover, for service of many kinds to the local community.

Secondly, people were more ready to support the united church because, in almost every case, it provided a service which they considered superior. It had a better-paid minister, a more elaborate musical program, a larger Sunday school, and more varied social activities. Since people received more from the church, they were willing to pay more liberally toward its support.

Again, united churches appealed much more strongly than had strictly denominational churches to persons outside the membership. Men that had refused their contributions to a strictly Methodist or Baptist church were ready to help a church undertaking religious ministry to the whole community. For thirty-six united churches surveyed, representing all types of union, the amounts received through subscription were divided according to whether they were contributed by members of the local church or by non-members. One-fourth of the subscribers proved to be non-members; and this class contributed one-seventh of the total amount subscribed. Among the types of union, the denominational united churches had among their supporters the largest proportion, 32.0 per cent., of non-members; and the proportion of the total subscriptions that was given by non-members was also highest for this type, being 22.6 per cent. A certain denominational united church received more than half of its total subscriptions from non-member contributors. One reason for this difference was that some persons were less easily persuaded to become members of a united church of the denominational type. But several of the denominational united churches surveyed had gradually drawn into membership contributors of this kind, thereby experiencing

a decline, not in total receipts, but in the proportion of their funds received from non-members.

Not only did non-members contribute with unusual liberality to united churches, but business men were found to be more ready to undertake their financial tasks. Such friends not infrequently became members of the finance committee or rendered special assistance at the time of the annual canvass. The manager of a large mill, for example, put at the service of the finance committee the list of operatives of the mill and the services of an employee.

A fourth reason for the greater ease in raising money experienced by united churches lay in the fact that most of them conducted their business affairs according to approved modern methods, including the budget, the canvass, and the envelope system. Among seventy-one united churches surveyed, the financial methods of which were investigated, all three of these methods were employed by thirty-nine churches, or well over half. The proportion of churches using these methods in the Twenty-five Counties was somewhat under one-third.[1] Two of these methods were employed by fifty-seven churches, or over three-fourths of the whole number; and at least one of the methods was used by nine-tenths of the churches. Since these methods were applied by united churches in the same way as by denominational churches, no description of them is required here.

Initial gain in financial matters was sometimes followed by a slump, and a few churches had not raised their standard at any time. This was usually ascribed to lack of vision. It occasionally resulted from a failure on the part of the church to live up to the program originally proposed or to embody the ideal expected by the community from the "community church." The responsibility for decline was sometimes laid on unfortunate leadership, the financial committee being charged with failing in efficiency or in energy, or the minister with not being capable of handling the situation. In other places, the rank and file, either from the notion that combination of forces should result in the re-

[1] Morse and Brunner, *The Town and Country Church in the United States* (New York; Doran, 1923), p. 141.

duction of expenditure, or because responsibility for the budget was now distributed among a greater number of individuals, had cut down their contributions. Of more than one united church it was reported that many of its subscribers were giving only half as much as they had contributed before union. One minister explained in a letter:

> The discouraging feature is resident in the fallacy that churches can combine and have a budget one-third as large as three small ones. They complain of the expenses and sigh for the "good old days" when $5.00 to $10.00 a year paid all the debts of Christianity.

Many united churches, on the contrary, as a successful program of religious and social service won to their support more and more elements in the larger community, experienced increasing ease in raising the necessary funds. The treasurer of one such church reported that the canvass of the current year had resulted in the subscription of an amount $1,000 greater than had ever been promised before.

PROBLEMS OF FEDERATED CHURCHES

The funds required for their joint activities by the earliest federated churches were raised by the units separately. Sometimes the units contributed equal amounts; where membership or financial strength were seriously unequal, responsibility was often divided in proportion to numbers or according to ability to pay. This method was perpetuated in some places in the Northern Colonial area, where it originated, especially in states where coöperative denominational leadership did not introduce a different system. The dual or multiple financial arrangement implied separate treasurers for the units, separate bookkeeping, and frequently separate envelopes, which were sorted out by the treasurers after each service at which an offering had been taken; and there was also an understanding as to the division of loose collections. This plan was commended by a certain denominational superintendent for use by churches showing a spirit of what he called "pull-hauling," that is, where each unit tried to leave the greater share of the financial burden on the shoulders of the other.

In general, however, although some federated churches began partnership with this arrangement, they frequently changed it for a joint canvass, a single financial committee, one set of collectors, and one treasurer. Moreover, among many federated churches, both in states where interdenominational leadership suggested the plan and in many scattered localities elsewhere, the finances were handled from the beginning by the united church as a whole.

Of forty-two federated churches for which information was obtained on this point, the finances of only seven were conducted separately by the units; they were handled by the federated church as a whole in the other thirty-five instances. Moreover, of fourteen united churches regarding which information on this point is available for two different periods, at the first period there were five churches the finances of which were handled by the units; at the second period the finances were handled by the church as a whole in every case without exception.

Property

The financial methods of united churches having been described, attention will now be given to their peculiar problems connected with property.

DIFFICULTIES

Considerations regarding property occasioned serious problems either before union or afterwards for a large majority of united churches formed by the union of existing churches, a satisfactory solution frequently not having been reached for years. The chief difficulties encountered were of three kinds: overhead denominational ownership, the dead hand, and divided associations.

Overhead Ownership

According to the usage of some denominations, the title to the property of local churches was frequently held not by local trustees, but by denominational conferences, presby-

teries and the like, or if held locally, the discipline required that property no longer to be used by a strictly denominational church should be surrendered to such regional bodies. These agencies, because they considered that the funds invested in the real estate of local churches were contributed for religious work by the denomination, not for religious work in the community, felt it their duty in many cases to insist that such property should be owned, and sometimes that it should be used, only by churches of their own denominations. Therefore, churches combining under any of the types of union, and more especially where the type desired was undenominational, experienced difficulties in obtaining title to property as a united church. Overhead authorities in at least one instance went so far as to take out an injunction against united church leaders.

The Dead Hand

In the second place, property, whether real estate or invested funds, that had been left to a church as a legacy, was frequently tied up by conditions. For example, land had been given for the site of a church with the condition that the property should be used only for the worship of a specified denomination; or, again, property was left, the income of which was available only for preaching by ministers of a specified denomination. The beneficiaries of property thus grasped by the "dead hand" were naturally loath to sacrifice their claim to it. Sometimes such hesitation was traceable to motives other than financial. A certain building which was to revert to the heirs, if it was not used by a specified denomination, would be used as a dance hall of a questionable nature if it did so revert. Another church edifice had been erected through contributions from fifteen different donors; and the deed specified that if the property should ever be used for any other purposes than worship of the denomination intended, the amounts contributed by each should be returned to them or to their heirs. This arrangement had been made a generation previously; it was certain there were heirs, though none actually resided in the com-

munity; and to find them all and satisfy their claims was regarded as an onerous task.

Divided Associations

A still more serious difficulty lay in the warm attachment of many persons to separate church properties. A very general feeling was expressed by one man in these words: "To give up my church building would be as deep a sorrow to me as to bury my father or my mother." The idea of selling a church building for secular uses or even of devoting such a building under the supervision of the church to purposes of recreation, was to many persons very unwelcome.

Results

Because of these three obstacles, considerations connected with property deferred many unions and frustrated many projected unions. For a considerable number of united churches once organized, too, divided property interests seriously interfered with internal harmony. Moreover, for thirty-two federations ending in separation for which local informants filled out mail schedules, difficulties connected with property so serious as to be named among factors terminating the partnership were reported in six cases.

METHODS UNDER DIVIDED OWNERSHIP

Many united churches owned two or more church buildings, each of them often consisting of only one room, which formed neither singly nor in combination a plant in any way adequate to house a modern program for the larger church. Many churches were also hampered by the lack of funds required for any thoroughgoing adaptation of the properties.

Three units of a certain federated church, for example, owned separately three church buildings scattered in an open-country community. The building nearest the center of population, which belonged to the Christian Church, was a one-room edifice without pipe organ, electricity or adequate

heating plant. It stood on a small plot of land in danger of being still further reduced by the cutting off from it of an asserted right of way. This church would forfeit the income of a legacy unless services were held in the building for a certain proportion of the Sundays in every year. The Baptist building, rather less centrally placed, had all the deficiencies of the Christian edifice except that it possessed the best heating arrangements of any one of the three buildings. The Congregational building was inconveniently located and its furnace, which burned only wood, was incapable of making the church comfortable through the depth of winter; but it had a vestry, a pipe organ and electric lights. Services were held in each of three buildings during four months of the year. When the time came to change, some one called up some one else on the telephone, and an announcement was inserted in the local paper. Leaders felt not only that the arrangement was inconvenient, but that divided property interests tended to perpetuate a spirit of separation. Yet no solution of the really serious problem had been reached.

Another federated church had two buildings. That belonging to the Universalist element was churchlike in architecture, was equipped with an excellent pipe organ, and contained a large basement used chiefly for church suppers but capable of being readily adapted for Sunday-school purposes. The Congregational building, though not so well adapted to worship, would have made an excellent community house, since on the main floor it had two parlors opening from the auditorium, and in the basement it had, like the other church, a kitchen and a dining-room. Yet the Congregationalists were unwilling that their building should be used for social purposes. Here also the buildings continued to be used alternately.

Alternate Use of Buildings

Alternate use of church buildings proved to be common, especially among federated churches. Of the forty-one churches of this type for which information on this point

was available, nineteen used their buildings alternately. Alternation was sometimes adjusted to the seasons of the year. If one building was more easily heated than another, it was naturally chosen for use in winter. Where the alternation was among three buildings, the length of time for worshiping in each was frequently about four months. Other churches changed from one building to another monthly, others bi-monthly, still others each week. Several churches used two buildings, each for certain services on the same day. Every summer, for example, a certain federated church worshiped on one Sunday in the Presbyterian building in the morning and in the Reformed building in the afternoon, reversing the order the following week; and held prayer meetings in the two churches alternately.

The alternate use of buildings was found very inconvenient. One church alternating Sunday by Sunday found it impossible to move the hymn books each week; the beginners did without low tables on every alternate Sunday, and fuel had to be stored in both buildings. The pastor of another church with a similar arrangement was in the habit of transferring each week from one building to the other the Sunday-school register and the board announcing attendance.

One Building Used to Supplement Another

Where two buildings were near enough together, both were frequently used for Sunday-school purposes. The smaller of two buildings was adapted by one church for the beginners and the primary department of the Sunday school by installing screens, tables, small chairs. and other suitable equipment.

Choice of Building for Worship

It was frequently possible for different elements to agree to use for worship some one of two or more available buildings. The choice was frequently determined either by con-

venience of location or by the superiority of one of the buildings. Some denominational units showed a considerable degree of the spirit of self-sacrifice in surrendering the privilege of worshiping in their accustomed places.

An undenominational church, for example, had available three buildings belonging to dormant United Presbyterian, Christian, and Baptist organizations. The Christian edifice was too small for the combined congregation. The United Presbyterians took the lead in declaring that as the Baptist church was more centrally located it should be adopted as the sole house of worship. When a building was chosen for exclusive use, there were frequently transferred to it from other houses of worship such desirable equipment as kindergarten chairs and tables, or a pipe organ.

Specialized Uses of Extra Buildings

In some communities having united churches extra buildings were allowed to stand empty and unused. The undenominational church mentioned in the preceding paragraph, however, was an exception. The United Presbyterians sold their buildings and the Christian unit gave theirs to the Federated Ladies' Aid for Aid meetings, for the councils of the church board, and for the sessions of the men's class. Many other churches after the lapse of time came to adopt the policy of applying extra buildings to some specialized use. Most of them were adapted for use as community houses. Others were used as libraries, and still others were let or lent to schools for use as gymnasiums or classrooms. Ownership of a few such buildings was transferred to the towns.

The presence of unused buildings seemed to many leaders of united churches to constitute a serious danger. The failure to make some disposal of such a building was considered equivalent to saying, "If you don't want to play with us, we'll go home." A church that boarded up its windows and refused for five years to have any use made of its building although the Legion offered to buy it, was believed to be leaving the way open for a future resumption

of activities. In this instance, and in many similar situations, responsibility for preserving buildings unused was ascribed to denominational superintendents. While the condition lasted the permanence of the union was not felt to be assured.

Repairs and Improvements

Where two or more units owned separate properties, the repairs and improvements were handled in several different ways. By one system the responsibility for them was carried by the separate denominational units, which in that case naturally paid the bills. By a second plan, the units cared for any buildings not actually used by the united church, but buildings employed for common activities were kept in repair on the initiative and at the expense of the church as a whole. According to a third arrangement, all properties were considered as under the care of the united organization, expenses being met by the church as a whole. Under this last arrangement, it was frequently provided that no structural alterations should be made in any building without the formal consent of the unit holding the title to the property.

Property thus held by a denominational unit was sometimes repaired or improved at considerable expense by the united church as a whole; and in some places contributions from all elements were thus invested, seemingly without grudging and with no foreboding of future complications. Upon a certain Baptist building, the deed of which was held by respected local Baptist trustees in favor of the union movement, there was expended $1,800 to $2,000, contributed by individuals belonging to all elements of the church and community.

ACQUIRING A UNIFIED PLANT

Many united churches had attained such a degree of self-consciousness as a single whole that they used the various properties, to whatever denominational element these had

originally belonged or still belonged, as parts of one combined church plant. This practical end was accomplished through several different methods.

Lease

Several united churches leased the properties from the local denominational churches technically holding the title to them. One church took a formal lease of the three denominational properties for five years, with the privilege of renewal, at the rent of one dollar. Another, an undenominational church, leased the church building and the parsonage of one of the vestigial organizations for the term of ten years, which might be extended if desired, at a rent of "one dollar and other valuable considerations." An undenominational church used the property of its two elements without formal agreement. A real estate man among the church leaders tried for the first five years to put the matter on a legal basis through lease; but nothing was done, although the community church paid all the indebtedness incurred previous to union upon one building and part of that incurred upon another, and also put $1,000 into improvements upon one of the buildings.

Ownership

Formal ownership of all properties by the united church was frequently held highly desirable for several reasons. Property owned in common did not involve conflicting sentimental associations. The various buildings could be repaired without jealousy; and improvements and structural alterations even on a large scale were made possible. Moreover, through the unification of property interests a serious danger to the permanency of the union was removed.

Incorporation

To qualify for holding property, a number of united churches in states where the incorporation of religious

organizations is not required became legally incorporated. Not all churches taking this step had fully succeeded at the time of the survey in acquiring title to the property of all their units. When incorporating, several such churches reorganized under a revised constitution. Sometimes it was not the church that incorporated but a civil organization connected with it, called a society or an incorporation.

Quitclaim Deed

A certain undenominational church incorporated partly to be able to hold title to a large and beautiful church building that one of the elements of the church had offered to transfer to the community church. This transaction was recorded in the church minutes as follows:

> The following proposition was presented by the . . . Society. . . . Said Society would give quitclaim deed to . . . church property . . . to the Community Church on condition that said Community Church assume the debt against the . . . Church, keep the property in good repair and reasonably well insured. If the Community Church fails to use said property for religious purposes for a period of three years, the same shall revert to the . . . Church Society. . . .
>
> This proposition was well discussed and then accepted by a unanimous vote of Directors, with full appreciation of all for the generous spirit of . . . Church Society.

Obtaining Title from Overhead Agencies

Unification of property was sometimes achieved with the help of denominational overhead authorities. In case of unions of the denominational type, the transfer of property was frequently adjusted, with the aid of denominational superintendents, at the time the consolidation was effected. These officials tried in such cases to balance the surrender of property in one community by the acquisition in another of property held by the other denomination concerned. Sometimes, even without an exchange, denominational authorities either surrendered the title to property completely to a church, or, more commonly, permitted the use of it so long as it should be employed for religious purposes.

Such concessions were more readily granted to churches connected with denominations, being frequently denied to churches not so connected. Yet a few undenominational churches were granted the use of a building, and even the title to one.

The officials of any denomination that had paid home-mission money toward the erection of a church frequently felt a sense of obligation either to retain the building for the denomination or to obtain an equivalent amount to expend in denominational work elsewhere. Yet this was not always exacted. A certain undenominational church was given a Congregational building subject to a mortgage of $500, the amount that had been granted toward its erection by the Congregational Church Building Society. The mortgage was not to be paid off unless at some future time the building should cease to be used for religious purposes. A similar arrangement was not uncommon.

The overhead officials of certain denominations were found more insistent than those of others upon receiving the full value of property to which they held title. This was particularly true of the officials of Methodist Episcopal conferences. Several united churches were asked to pay for Methodist buildings that had been erected entirely at local expense. One undenominational church rebelled so strongly against such a demand, that, calling attention to several hundred dollars' worth of improvements made since union, it threatened that, if Conference insisted in denying them the use of the Methodist building they would hold their services in the one belonging to their Baptist Church, which was then rented to an organization of Adventists. The district superintendent dropped the matter for the time; and somewhat later, at the instigation of the home-missions council of the state, the united church became affiliated with the Methodist Conference.

More than one Methodist conference, however, surrendered the title to a church building on receipt of the amount of home-mission money invested in it, as in the following instance. A small Presbyterian and a small Meth-

odist church consolidated as a Congregational church. The Presbytery turned over the Presbyterian property unconditionally. The Methodist Conference, under official restrictions, felt unable to do the same; but, of the $3,500 that the building was supposed to be worth, when the church turned over $2,000, the amount of the investment of the building society, to the trustees of the Conference, the Conference contributed the remaining $1,500.

Some united churches that had been refused title to denominational buildings paid the denominational authorities for them. Others forfeited them, and they were sold by the conference or other overhead body either to another church, to some secular agency such as the Grange, or to a business man for use as a garage, a hall, a mill or a store.

Combination of Buildings

A consolidated church moved one of its church buildings to the back of the other and altered the combined edifice so as to render it a very efficient plant. Another, formed through the absorption by an active church of two dying churches, after one building had been destroyed by fire, moved to the empty site both the others and built a tower between them. Similar measures were adopted by other united churches. For combination was claimed the advantage of being comparatively cheap. Sometimes, however, the complex structure was considered unsatisfactory in its architecture.

New Buildings

Typical united churches in widely separated parts of the country, although each had at its disposal three small buildings belonging to the units, agreed in thinking that the really desirable course would be to buy these buildings, so far as this was necessary, from the overhead bodies, and having sold them or torn them down, to erect for the use of the united church an entirely new structure, to which would be attached no divided associations and no separate

denominational liens. This course was not practicable in either case, for financial reasons. Other united churches, however, had succeeded in erecting new buildings, and more were planning to do so.

Funds for use in the erection of a new building were sometimes derived in part from the sale of an inferior structure belonging to one of the elements. A number of churches turned one or more church buildings into cash. A church with three buildings sold one, and exchanged another for lots adjoining the third, which it remodeled. Extra parsonages, since they had no sentimental associations, were frequently disposed of in this way. Some churches could apply to building operations an unrestricted income fund. A church that had just changed from the federated to the denominational type of union, obtained $1,900 or $2,000 of its building fund from the sale of an extra parsonage, $1,500 from an unrestricted legacy, and the rest from subscriptions. This third source of money is the one drawn upon most generally.

Building Campaigns

In their building campaigns, united churches, especially those not in competitive situations, stressed their peculiar claim upon the community in general or at least upon the whole Protestant community. Appeals were sometimes made through local papers, sometimes by the use of circular letters sent to church-members and to the public likely to be interested in a community religious enterprise.

Safeguarding Separate Interests

United churches making combined expenditures on property did not always burn their boats. Many, especially among federated churches, took legal measures to safeguard the financial interests of the respective units against possible separation in the future. A device not infrequently employed was a mortgage. When, for example, a certain united church sold the Methodist parsonage and put the

proceeds into repairs on the Congregational parsonage, the Congregationalists gave the Methodists a first mortgage to the amount of the sum used, without interest, the money to be paid only if the house should ever be used otherwise than as a parsonage.

Another church, in anticipation of making extended structural improvements on a church building for common use, entered into a formal contract providing that in case of separation, if sufficient property remained, a sum equal to the contribution of each denomination should be turned over to the respective denominational state headquarters; and if the value of the property should be insufficient, it should be divided proportionately.

Another formal agreement under consideration at the time of the survey provided that in case of separation not only should the contributions of local Baptists and Presbyterians be made good to the respective overhead agencies, but that a sum equivalent to the contributions from the community at large should be remitted to these denominational agencies, being divided in proportion to the local strength of the denominational churches, three-fifths going to the Presbyterian Synod and two-fifths to the Baptist State Convention.

Instead of providing for the repayment of the entire amount contributed, another united church contracted to repay half. The amendment recording their action, which contained a provision regarding deterioration, was in part as follows:

> One-half of the paid equity shall be debted to the body in whose favor the balance stands, and shall be considered a debt of honor and paid accordingly to the proper representative of the other properties not receiving as much paid for permanent improvements (the other half stands for Community interest and deterioration). Each equity shall be divided in ten equal parts from the time it starts to run and will decrease a tenth each year.

A third church inserted in its revised constitution the following provision:

> If ever a dissolution of Federation should improbably occur, all movable property shall become the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church as a recognition of the use of their building during Federation (Federation-owned property that is).

A further provision under consideration by this last church was to the effect that after twenty years of common use of the Methodist property, which was being considerably enlarged through the use of funds contributed partly by Presbyterians, Baptists and non-church-members, the donors should be considered as having received through the service of the church to the community the full value of the sums contributed.

PROPERTY CONSIDERATIONS CEMENTING UNION

Although problems connected with property were so serious that they had delayed many prospective unions, had prevented others, and had contributed to the failure of unions once begun, yet, on the other hand, property considerations had proved influential in bringing certain united churches into closer union. A conviction that the perpetuation of two or more church plants involved inefficiency, waste, insecurity and divided interests, was influential in bringing about thorough reorganization resulting in a union far more closely knit than before.

Chapter XII

LEADERSHIP

The kinds of leaders of united churches that will be considered in this chapter are the ministers and the local lay leaders. The importance to these churches of a third kind of leaders, namely, denominational officials, is fully recognized; but, since the present section of this book concerns only problems within the jurisdiction of the local church, the influence exerted by overhead denominational officials will not be considered here, but in a later chapter on "Adjustments by the Denominations."

The Minister

FACTORS DETERMINING SUPPLY

One of the reasons for uniting forces most frequently mentioned was a desire to obtain better ministerial service. People wished a resident, full-time minister of superior abilities. Such a man they hoped to attract by offering an unusually large salary out of their combined resources.

Salary Offered [1]

For this reason the average salary paid by united churches of all types was considerably higher than that paid by churches in general. In comparison with the average salary for the ministers in the town and country area of the Twenty-five Counties, which was $1,030 [2] (an allowance of $250 having been made for each minister with the free use of a parsonage), the averages for the types of united churches

[1] See Appendix Table VIII.

[2] *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, p. 147. "In these figures is included the $250 allowed for the rental value of each parsonage that is provided free of charge." Ibid., p. 144.

(no allowance for parsonage being included) were as follows: for denominational united churches, $1,349; for federated churches, $1,615; and for undenominational churches, $1,403. A large majority of the ministers were granted, in addition to their cash salaries, the free use of parsonages.

Attitudes of Ministers

The supply of ministers available for united churches was partly determined by the attitudes of ministers. To many ministers united churches were attractive as a field of labor. Some were drawn to them by the fact that they were experiments in Christian brotherhood. Others looked upon united churches, especially those alone in their communities, as offering to their minister what was called by several "a man's job." Still others, believing that the community church of one type or another was sure of a great future, considered that such churches offered at once an opportunity for service and a field for legitimate ambition. And a few, brilliant but unstable men, some of them not having received seminary training and others having been discredited by their denominations, took advantage of the absence of supervision, or of the less strict supervision, existing among united churches of some types, to exploit such churches for their own personal advantage, during a service that usually proved brief.

On the other hand, ministers of certain characteristics found the service of united churches distasteful. Their former parishioners reported that some men of this kind were bound by the red tape of their denominations, and that some lacked wide human sympathy and the art of conciliation. There were ministers who declared the service of united churches to have been irksome to them because in pressing the claims of missions they had felt hampered by the combination of denominational elements. A minister resigning from a federated church asserted to his denominational superintendent that nothing would induce him to accept another such charge: that it had been like driving a team when neither horse was broken.

Natural selection was plainly at work, culling out from

among the future candidates for the pulpits of united churches those ill-adapted for the service.

Qualities Desired in Ministers

A third factor in determining the kind of men who filled the pulpits of united churches was the attitude of local leaders of the churches respecting their prospective ministers. These leaders generally regarded it as indispensable that the first minister of a united church should be acceptable to all the diverse elements; and many churches selected at this juncture a mild, gentle man, genial, perhaps, unaggressive—a reconciler. Afterwards it was sometimes said of such a man that he had been chosen "because he would do no harm." But people also said of him, "He made us feel ourselves one," or "He got us accustomed to working together." Besides this faculty of reconciliation, valued especially in the beginning, united churches appeared chiefly to seek in their ministers two things: a good preacher and a man with a reputation for community service. Other qualifications desirable in view of the peculiar conditions of united churches were not usually recognized by church leaders.

The supply of ministers was also limited by denominational regulations and by the attitudes of individual denominational superintendents; but these matters will be treated in the chapter on "Adjustments by the Denominations."

MODE OF APPOINTMENT

United churches connected with certain denominations, especially with the various Methodist bodies, accepted in accordance with the discipline, ministers appointed by overhead authorities. Other churches of the denominational type of union, and churches in general of all other types, except a few Methodist units of federated churches, made their own provisions as to how the minister should be elected.

For advice in the selection of ministers, many united churches turned to denominational superintendents or, where they existed, to interdenominational agencies. This was the

practice even of some undenominational churches; but many churches of this type had great difficulty in finding ministers. The Community Church Workers established in the spring of 1924 a service bureau, the function of which was to be to mediate between united churches and ministers desiring such charges. By the spring of 1925 this agency had filled thirty vacancies.

The procedure of federated churches in calling ministers was in some respects peculiar. Some federated churches, especially in their early years, acted as two or more separate units, each unit independently calling the minister agreed upon. This minister was for some federated churches the pastor of one of the units and the supply—or, if the unit was Presbyterian, the "stated supply"—of the other. More frequently, action was taken by the federated church as a whole, or, if non-member supporters were allowed a vote, by the federated congregation. The constitution of a certain federated church surveyed provided that for property reasons the choice of minister must be approved by the Methodist Conference and by the Presbytery.

Some united churches of all types provided that the church board should recommend a candidate to be voted upon by the church. Other churches left the investigation and practically the decision to the executive board, but required that the choice be formally ratified by the church. According to still another method, the selection of the minister was relegated entirely to the official board.

By some united churches of all types a majority vote was sufficient to select a minister; others required a two-thirds vote.

DENOMINATION OF THE MINISTER

Many federated churches, especially in states where denominational officials acting in coöperation exerted their influence to that end, incorporated in their constitution some provision as to the denomination of the minister. According to a common plan, ministers of the different denominations represented in the federation were to alternate. Sometimes,

especially where one church was decidedly the stronger, it was agreed that all the ministers should be appointed from the denomination of the stronger unit. The most common arrangement the country over, however, was that in the selection of a minister his denomination should not even be taken into consideration. Of thirty-seven federations concerning which information on this point was obtained, eleven chose their ministers alternately from the denominations represented, and twenty-six provided that denomination should not affect choice. Moreover, of twelve united churches for which information was available for two stages of development, three used the principle of alternation at the first stage, but none at the second. That the minister tended, however, to be drawn from one of the denominations represented is shown by the fact that of 264 federated churches the denominations of whose ministers were known, only fourteen had a minister different in denomination from that of any of the units.

The same condition was found among churches of the other types of union. Among 390 denominational united churches of four denominations for which the denomination of the minister was known, 363 had a minister of their own denomination, while only twenty-seven had a minister of some other denomination. The denomination having the largest number of churches served by ministers of other denominations, was the Congregational; and the denomination of which there were most ministers serving churches of other denominations was the Methodist Episcopal. Eleven Congregational churches were served by Methodist ministers. These figures do not include ministers formerly of other denominations that had adopted the denomination of their church. One church, originally undenominational but later affiliated, provided that the minister might "be called from any evangelical denomination, except that represented by his predecessor."

PREPARATION OF MINISTERS

Education

The questions of the schedule concerning the ministers' education were answered by 231 ministers. Of these, all but twenty-three, or one-tenth this total number, had been students, if they were not graduates, of some college or theological seminary or of both. Appreciation of the importance of filling in schedules implies some degree of education; but enough for the purpose might easily be acquired during one or two years at college. What is significant about the ministers answering these schedules is the proportion of them who had a considerably more extended education. Not only had 200 of the men, 86.5 per cent., been students at college, but 148, 64.0 per cent., were college graduates; 184, 79.6 per cent., had had theological training at seminaries; 141, 61.0 per cent., were seminary graduates; and 106, 45.9 per cent., were graduates both of college and of seminary.

The proportion of ministers with advanced education was even greater for the churches for which information was obtained on this point through surveys. Of the ministers of fifty-two churches visited, thirty-one, or about three-fifths, were graduates both of college and of seminary.

On all these points the federated churches somewhat outranked the denominational churches, and the churches of both of these types were considerably ahead of the undenominational churches.

That a considerable proportion of the ministers of united churches were well educated was particularly significant at a period when a decline in the education of the minister was arousing anxiety among educators and among denominational leaders.

Experience in the Ministry

For 221 churches, information was furnished through schedules concerning the number of years the pastors had been in the ministry. The average length of service was

17.6 years. Less than 8 per cent. were without previous experience in the ministry. Comparatively few of the ministers—only twenty-six—had served less than five years. The experience of somewhat more than one-third, 36.6 per cent., of the total number had lasted from five to fifteen years—that is, a large proportion of the ministers were still young. Comparatively few, only eighteen, belonged to the group that had served as ministers from fifteen to twenty years. Those that had served over twenty years numbered ninety-six and constituted 43.5 per cent. of the entire number. Among young men and older men, accordingly, were found ministers chosen for their supposed adaptation to the peculiar conditions of united churches.

The younger men were desired partly for the training, given only to comparatively recent seminary classes, in modern church programs and modern views of the Bible; and partly for their supposed energy and comparative freedom from theological bias.

Among the 221 churches the federated churches most appreciated the older men, for half of them were served by men that had been in the ministry more than twenty years. The dual or multiple structure of federated churches rendered peculiarly acceptable to them the qualities of some older ministers.

Previous Experience with United Churches

Among 290 ministers answering the question whether or not they had previously served a united church, only fifty, 17.2 per cent., had had such a preparatory experience. For the undenominational churches the proportion was somewhat higher than for churches of the other types.

AMOUNT OF MINISTERIAL SERVICE

Resident Ministers [3]

Because of the comparatively high salaries they offered, united churches had a large percentage of ministers resident in the community. For the entire number of united churches

[3] See Appendix Table XI.

of all types listed, it was attempted to obtain through schedules, surveys, denominational statistics and otherwise, information as to whether or not they had ministers in 1923, and if so, whether or not the ministers were resident. Of the entire number, 839, or 85.8 per cent., were ascertained to have ministers. The proportion of churches having ministers known to be resident was 59.9 per cent., and the proportion having ministers known to be non-resident was 18.8 per cent. For 7.1 per cent. of the churches it could not be learned whether or not they had ministers; and for 7.1 per cent., though it was discovered that they had ministers, it could not be determined whether or not these were resident. So that, for 14.2 per cent. of the churches, the situation was in one way or another uncertain. The exact proportion of churches having resident ministers, therefore, was not lower than 59.9 per cent., and may have been anywhere between that and 74.1 per cent. As the proportion of town and country churches with resident ministers in the 179 Counties was 35.5 per cent.,[4] a comparatively high proportion of united churches were served by ministers living in the community.

The 58.9 per cent. for denominational united churches came close to that for united churches in general. For undenominational churches it was lower, being only about one-third, 34.3 per cent. For federated churches, on the other hand, it was over twice the proportion prevailing in the 179 Counties, being 72.8 per cent., only one point below the proportion prevailing in the 140 Villages, where size of community and competitive conditions combined to make the number of resident ministers unusually high.

For seventy-five united churches surveyed, because the majority of united churches selected for study in the field were comparatively strong, resident ministers were the rule for an even higher proportion still. Though, on the date when they were visited, a few churches happened to be between pastorates, all but five habitually employed the services of a resident minister. Almost all, moreover, provided their ministers with free parsonages.

[4] Compiled from data on page 73 of *The Town and Country Church in the United States.*

Full-time Ministers

Of the ministers filling out schedules, 249 reported on whether or not they devoted full time to one church. Nearly two-thirds of these men gave their whole time to one church, neither serving another church nor pursuing any other occupation. In this matter the federated church took the lead, with 70.7 per cent. of its ministers giving their full time to one church; and the denominational united church, with 59.5 per cent.—perhaps because of long-established circuits —had a somewhat lower proportion than the undenominational church, for which the ratio was 61.8 per cent. Virtually all of these full-time ministers were resident ministers.

The churches for which schedules were returned probably had resident ministers in a somewhat unusually high proportion of cases. But even making allowances for this, far more of the united churches must have had full-time resident ministers than of the town and country churches in the 179 Counties, for which the proportion was only 16.5 per cent.[5]

Length of Pastorate

For sixty-one of the united churches surveyed, all the ministers that had served each church were listed, with the length of each pastorate. The number of pastorates had been 167, the average length being 2.7 years. The average length of the unfinished pastorates was 2.1 years. Ten completed terms of service for these churches amounted to only a fraction of a year each. The only pastorates among the 167 that had lasted ten years or more were one of ten years, two of eleven years each, and one of seventeen years. Seven churches had had five or more different ministers, two churches having had seven each and one of long standing having had nine.

Among 234 ministers answering through schedules the question as to length of pastorate, the average number of years that the minister had served to date was 2.9. One-

[5] *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, p. 73.

ninth of the ministers had been in their pulpits less than a year. Only a little more than one-sixth, 17.9 per cent., had held their positions five years or more, and only eight, 3.4 per cent., had held their positions ten years or more. Since the average pastorate of the town and country churches of the Twenty-five Counties was 3.8 years[5a] and that of the Successful Churches was 4.5 years,[6] the pastorates of united churches were on the average comparatively brief.

As between different types of union, judging from the 234 churches for which length of pastorate was reported through schedules, the undenominational churches had been served by their ministers for the shortest average time; and the highest proportion of churches that had changed ministers within the year was found among federated churches.

For the comparative brevity of the pastorates of united churches several reasons were discovered. Federated churches choosing ministers alternately from the denominations represented usually agreed upon a fixed term of service, which was included in the articles of agreement. The period thus set was from one to three years, two years being most common. One church set the term at one year with the privilege of extending the time. Many churches of all types of union had restricted the length of pastorate. A certain church decreed in its constitution that no pastor should be retained for a second or a third year except on a four-fifths vote of the pastoral supply committee, and after a third year only by a unanimous vote of that committee.

The danger of getting a misfit or a bad character for a minister, to which all churches are liable, was intensified for united churches, partly by the lack of a clear understanding as to what characteristics were required in the ministers and partly by the frequent absence of safeguards equal to those prevailing for churches of most denominations. Moreover, the qualifications considered requisite for ministers of united churches, as will be shown later in this chapter, are so numerous and so rare that many men attempting to fill such pulpits failed to do so to the satisfac-

[5a] *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, p. 73.
[6] *Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches*, p. XVI.

tion of their people, especially since the presence of diverse elements in a church made it difficult to choose any minister permanently acceptable to all.

These facts regarding length of pastorate, when taken together, tend to discredit the theory sometimes advanced that united churches owe whatever cohesiveness they may have to the personality of a minister and that upon his departure they speedily disintegrate. Only nine of the sixty-one united churches surveyed had had but a single minister since union; and of the nine, four had been in existence not more than two years. Moreover, only two of the nine ministers had been on the field as leaders during the movement toward union. Further evidence tending in the same direction was obtained by comparing in denominational statistics the names of the ministers who served during the year before union and the names of the ministers who served in 1923. Of 119 federated churches, for which information was available, only fifteen, or 12.6 per cent., had retained their ministers; and of thirty-two consolidated churches only two had retained their ministers. Some of the united churches surveyed had continued through several changes of pastorate.

EFFECTS OF CHANGE OF MINISTER

The unusually short pastorate of united churches made it particularly important to study the effects of changes of ministers. Like churches in general, united churches frequently chose as a new pastor a man very different from his predecessor. This resulted for some churches in the development by the newcomer of new sides of church work that under his predecessor had received less attention. Of thirty-five churches surveyed that had had either two or three ministers since union, only two had declined under a new minister; fourteen had remained virtually static through all changes; for one a new minister had continued satisfactorily the program of his predecessor without adding anything; and for eighteen the new ministers had not only carried on the work already initiated, but had introduced

additional activities. For a few churches, on the contrary, the change of pastorate had resulted in the abandonment of promising lines of activity.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MINISTERS

To have as a minister a man ill-adapted to the peculiar conditions and especially a man of bad character, was a more than usually serious matter in the case of united churches, because for them the presence of diverse elements resulted in an unusual instability. A leader that was not generally respected, or that could not handle difficult situations with judgment, fairness and tact, meant in an uncommon degree not merely distraction from the true concerns of the church, but serious dissension and possible dissolution. Considerations connected with ministers, indeed, were reported as factors in the abandonment of fourteen of twenty-nine temporary federations that were investigated through schedules; and for eight of these fourteen churches, the separation was reported to have been caused, at least in part, by characteristics of the minister himself.

Conclusions regarding the characteristics desirable in ministers of united churches have been deduced from four kinds of evidence. In surveying specific united churches, careful study was made of the effects of certain qualities in the ministers both past and contemporary upon the welfare of the church. In so doing, especial attention was paid to what local people within and without the church said about the ministers. The pastors themselves, when of a thoughtful and dispassionate turn of mind, often expressed opinions regarding qualities desirable in those confronted with such problems as their own. Still more light was afforded by denominational superintendents, and in some cases by interdenominational officials, that had had a large number of ministers of united churches under observation.

From this varied and abundant evidence it became clear that ministers serving united churches needed in a peculiar degree the following qualifications:

A spirit broadly Christian rather than denominational.
Impartiality toward all denominational elements in the united church served.
Loyalty toward the type of union represented by the united church served.
A patient, adaptable and conciliatory spirit.
Wide sympathies.
Common sense, and a judgment at once sane and alert.
A sense of humor.
Broad culture.
A vision of community service.
Special training.

Despite the peculiar difficulties presented by united churches, and notwithstanding their demand upon their ministers for unusual qualities of mind and heart, many of the men filling such pulpits regarded their tasks not as burdens from which they longed to escape, but as challenging opportunities for unusually effective service.

Lay Leaders

Since the majority of united churches were formed on the initiative not of ministers but of lay leaders, it follows that many of the churches possessed lay leaders of unusual force of character. The largest number of lay leaders were business men; a considerable number belonged to secular professions; smaller proportions came from the ranks of artisans and of farmers. In many cases they were without traditions of church-going and had been drawn into the united church by its distinctive characteristics. As has been shown in earlier chapters, the predominance among the leaders of practical men of affairs affected the work of united churches in nearly every department.

CONFLICTING LEADERSHIP

United churches composed of elements previously organized as local churches frequently included in the membership two or more persons that had been leaders in the original denominational churches. These individuals had usually acquired the habit of authority, and many of them were too

old easily to resign it. Friction and wounded feelings among church officials, far from unknown in strictly denominational churches, presented therefore an unusually serious problem for the ministers and lay leaders of many united churches, particularly when one of the denominational churches forming the union had internal factions.

The Minister and Lay Leaders

Church leaders sometimes took pains to limit the powers of their ministers. The constitutions of a considerable number of united churches provided that the minister should not be the chairman of the executive board; or that, though he should be "ex-officio a member" of this board, he should be "without the right to vote." An undenominational church even went so far as to make the following provision, "The pastor is not a member of any standing committee but his advice is to be sought and heeded by all." Still another undenominational church stipulated, "The pastor shall . . . at all times be subject to the voice of the church in all matters pertaining to the leadership and teaching."

In general, however, religious aspects of the work of the church were left by lay leaders almost wholly in the hands of the minister. A number of the ministers took definite steps to enlist the lay leaders both in community activities and in church work of a religious character. Several trained some of the laymen to take charge of services. Every member of another united church was being led by the minister to feel that he was responsible for an important part of the work of the church. Though these policies were not peculiar to united churches, the strong lay leadership made it practicable to apply them to uncommonly good effect.

Chapter XIII

SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

The attitude of a united church toward its community and the attitude of the community toward the church, especially if it was the only Protestant church in the place, were usually very different indeed from the attitude of competing denominational churches toward their community and that of the community toward them.

The feeling of the community toward a united church was well illustrated in a small agricultural community of the far West. The people all felt that the church was theirs. The building was never locked; it was used by any group needing a meeting place; and when people required chairs for any public assemblage they borrowed those belonging to the church. This attitude implied both an undivided constituency and one particularly easy of approach by the church.

On the other hand many united churches developed a peculiar sense of responsibility, voiced in one schedule in the words, "Church thinks in terms of community needs." Recognition of their opportunity and acceptance of the responsibilities were often symbolized by the adoption of the title "Community Church." But many churches calling themselves Federated, Union, United, and the like, also claimed, and held, a corresponding position in their communities.

This chapter will consider the performance by united churches of four kinds of community activities; namely, religious education, evangelism, guardianship of morals, and secular ministries.

Religious Education

The forms of religious education that will be discussed here are these: the Sunday school, young people's societies,

the training of leaders, and week-day religious education including the daily vacation Bible school.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The close relationship between the united church and the whole community made it unusually easy to draw into the Sunday school the children of the unchurched and the children of families preferring denominations not locally represented. Therefore a considerable number of united churches had uncommonly large Sunday schools. Whereas church leaders in general aim at a Sunday-school enrollment equal to resident church-membership—a standard which few churches attain—the number registered in the Sunday schools of forty united churches surveyed in the field was, in twenty-seven cases, greater than the resident church-membership; and the average Sunday-school enrollment of the forty churches was 121.9 per cent. of the total church-membership. This fact is the more significant since for thirty churches surveyed by the Institute of Social and Religious Research in a study of the most successful churches discoverable, the average Sunday-school enrollment was only 93.8 per cent. of the average resident church-membership.

The condition found in the field surveyed was more than substantiated by denominational statistics. The figures for church-membership and for Sunday-school enrollment furnished in denominational annual reports were compared for 265 denominational united churches. The average Sunday-school enrollment was over half as large again (156.1 per cent.) as the average church-membership. Three-fourths of these Sunday schools were larger than the churches maintaining them; and over one-fourth had an enrollment of two hundred or more.

Not a few of the Sunday schools studied overflowed the quarters available for them in the church building. Several sent part of the classes to a schoolhouse nearby. One conducted its various departments in two churches, one schoolhouse, and one other building. Certain classes of other

schools met in the parsonage; and at one parsonage two classes met in as many rooms and a third on the porch. Another school had to meet in two sections, the sessions of which took the whole of Sunday morning, the preaching service being in the evening. The united church of a community with a total population of about 1,000 had a Sunday school enrolling 600.

The unusual number from each age-group enlisted in classes, by making the companionship and the proceedings more interesting, tended not only still further to swell the enrollment but also to keep adolescents in Sunday school at the age when so frequently they slip away from religious influences. Of forty-five Sunday schools for which information on this point was obtained, thirty-six had one or more classes for teen-age students with an average enrollment per school of thirty-five, or one-fifth of the average total enrollment. Some of these young people were organized by classes or by departments in various social groups.

One reason for the ability of united churches to attract young people to their Sunday schools was the fact that they did not accentuate theological doctrines; for if they had done so union would not have occurred. Several of the united churches surveyed, especially those in college towns, frankly adopted in their young people's classes a modernist point of view. One such church, in a leaflet for distribution among students, made this statement:

> At 10:00 o'clock the minister teaches the College Young People's Class, giving a course on the Life and Teachings of Jesus, presenting Jesus from the viewpoint of the modern scholar.

Attendance at the Sunday schools of many united churches was also popular among the adults. Thirty-three of the schools with classes of young people had an even larger proportion of adult students, the average number per school being fifty-three.

Not all these adult groups proceeded conventionally through the International lessons. A certain class of business women was studying Rauschenbusch's *Social Principles of Jesus*. The men of another united church had a

forum, meeting in the parsonage at the Sunday-school hour. They discussed with much frankness and acuteness vital social problems of the day selected on a six months' program by a committee consisting of the pastor, one man from a denomination other than that of the church, and a self-styled atheist. The sessions were so interesting that they were often prolonged; and the average attendance for the whole year, including days of storm and the Sundays of the harvest season, was thirty. Though this class was nominally for men, a few women succeeded in gaining a foothold; and there were occasional discussions, such as one on modern methods with criminals, to which women were formally invited.

A few united churches were successful in enlisting unusual elements in the population. Children of foreign-born parents formed nearly two-thirds of the enrollment of a Sunday school of 213 pupils, there being fifteen children from such families among the beginners, thirty-six in the primary grades, and so on through the other departments. The Sunday school of 600 pupils already mentioned had many country children, and those of a certain district were brought to Sunday school in a bus, the Senior Christian Endeavor Society paying the bill. Clear across the United States from this church was another that also transported to its Sunday school a group of children largely of foreign parentage.

The achievement of these and other united churches, however, is valuable rather through showing possibilities than as indicating average attainment, because the communities of a considerable majority of the churches surveyed had foreign-born families, or families of other unusual elements, the children of which had not been drawn into the Sunday school.

Union of Schools

A very few federated churches had Sunday schools for the separate units; but most united churches of all types had a single united school. Those formed through the union of

two or more previously existing denominational churches encountered at the outset their own problems of reconstruction as a single organization. They generally combined the Sunday schools immediately upon the union of the churches. A few schools that deferred the step found that after the enthusiasm incident upon the opening of a new era had died down it was rather difficult to find an occasion for combining forces; though some Sunday schools did unite six months, or even longer, after the churches to which they were attached.

Sometimes one of the superintendents was continued in office; and in a few schools both were kept on, either as co-superintendents or one as superintendent and the other as his assistant. It was more common, however, to begin the new régime under a new head. The superintendents of not a few schools, and sometimes the teachers also, resigned to leave the field open for a new administration.

The choice of officers and teachers was frequently recognized as so important that either the nominations were made, or the selections were confirmed, or the whole business was conducted, by the executive body of the church.

Classes from the different schools were usually combined so as to group the pupils according to age and sex. Classes having a social organization, however, and classes particularly devoted to their teachers were sometimes permitted to continue their separate existence. Such classes sometimes absorbed members from other denominations. Self-sacrificing teachers frequently used their influence to bring about a rearrangement crossing denominational lines.

Sunday-school Literature

Two or more Sunday schools uniting in the middle of a quarter usually continued to use the lesson helps they had, especially if both or all followed the International series of lessons. In so doing very little inconvenience was experienced; and a lesson was received in the similarity of the teachings of the denominations concerned.

In anticipation of the day when new literature would be

required, the publications of various denominational and undenominational publishing houses were frequently investigated. Several courses of action were common. Some schools adopted for all departments the literature of one of the denominations concerned, sometimes choosing that of the minister and changing with any change in his denomination. Other schools adopted for certain departments the literature of one of the denominations represented and for other departments that of another. Others chose undenominational material and still others combined such matter with texts issued by one or more denominations.

As between graded and ungraded lessons, many of the united churches used progressive systems of graded lessons, either denominational, undenominational, or interdenominational. Graded lessons were more frequently used by united churches in villages. Several small country schools, after a trial of graded lessons, had returned to the use of texts on the international series of lessons. The reasons usually given for this were, first, that a school holding its opening and closing exercises as a unit in a single room needed uniform Bible passages which graded lessons do not have; and secondly, that it was more difficult to find substitute teachers for classes using graded lessons, since preparation of the lesson assigned to one class was of no assistance in teaching that of another grade.

Some schools used graded lessons for the younger groups and the International series for adult classes. By other schools the decisions between graded and ungraded lessons, among undenominational, interdenominational and denominational publications, and if denominational, the choice of denomination, were all left entirely to individual teachers. The combination of material from different sources that usually resulted from individual selections appeared to some teachers to promote breadth of view and tolerance of spirit, but at the same time to lack the advantages of a well-balanced and progressive course of study.

Two contrasting attitudes were observed toward material provided by denominational agencies. Some united churches felt that because they included members from many de-

nominations they could draw freely upon the supplies furnished by all. Such churches felt sympathy for the different denominational bodies and respect for the literature they provided. Other churches, on the contrary—chiefly undenominational churches and federated churches with a large undenominational roll—felt a certain distrust of all denominations and therefore preferred the publications of undenominational agencies.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES

Of 313 united churches for which the information was furnished by schedules, rather more than half, 55.6 per cent., had regular meetings for young people, the proportion being slightly higher for federated churches and a little lower for denominational united churches. These proportions were all higher than that prevailing in the Twenty-five Counties, where the proportion of churches having young people's societies was only 35.7 per cent.[1] The region where the highest proportion of united churches of all types had young people's meetings was the Pacific Coast.

A considerable number of united churches had two or more societies for young people of different age-groups. One large church had five, ranging from the Alumni Christion Endeavor to two Junior Endeavor groups.

The young people's societies of federated churches had usually been combined at the time the churches united. Of thirty-seven united churches with young people's societies, all but two had joint organizations.

One reason why young people's societies flourished among united churches is suggested by the average attendance, which was twenty-five for the total of 197 groups, and which rose to thirty-five or more for certain particular areas. These groups had the attractiveness of comparatively large numbers. Another reason lay in the leadership, both lay and ministerial, of the united churches.

[1] *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas,* p. 84.

TRAINING OF LEADERS

Many of the united churches, following accepted modern methods, increased the effectiveness of their teaching force through workers' councils and teacher-training classes. Some of these churches employed special methods to train leaders in all departments of church activity. An unusually large united church held on the church-night of the week a so-called School of Methods, consisting of separate classes in teacher training, mission-study training, Christian Endeavor methods, Scout training and stewardship.

Attendance at denominational and interdenominational conferences was utilized as an important factor in the training of leaders by more than a few united churches. The minister of a certain federated church reported an experiment of this kind as follows:

> The church is in northern Ohio and has a goodly number of young people; and the experiment was tried out in 1922. The effort was made possible by several interested and generous laymen and included thirty young people. The initial step was to send a senior high-school girl to the Cleveland Y.W.C.A. training camp at Madison, Ohio. She came home with renewed enthusiasm and large visions. Six young people were taken by automobile to the state Sunday-school convention at Canton for the full four days. They gained a new idea of the joy and worth of service in a well-built Bible school. Another automobile load was taken to the State Christian Endeavor convention at Akron with like results. Two young ladies went all the way to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, to attend the older girls' conference and will never forget that splendid experience. Six boys and girls spent a full week at the Congregational conference at Lakeside, Ohio, and in October two automobile loads went to the shorter young people's conference at Tiffin, Ohio, held under the auspices of the Sunday-school Association. The young people paid part of the expenses, some more than others; and the church paid the rest.
>
> From every standpoint the experiment was a splendid investment of time and money. Some of these young people are in college this year; others have moved to the city or to other towns; some are excellent leaders in the home church. After going over the list carefully I am glad to report that each one of the thirty is still a prominent student in the training school for leadership.[2]

[2] Rev. Payson Lewis Curtis, "A Study in Leadership and Leadership Training," *Christian Endeavor World,* Dec. 13, 1923.

Five of the six conferences to which these young people were sent were undenominational or interdenominational; the sixth was conducted by one of the three denominations represented in the federated church.

A similar experiment was tried in a decadent western mountain village. The minister persuaded each of several social organizations of the community to assume the expense of sending one young man or young woman of high-school age to a training conference. They sent four young people, the minister accompanying them. The young people became so enthusiastic that, before returning home, they resolved to hold at a lake near the home community a conference of their own for some of their comrades. Out of this second conference grew a young people's council through which the ambitions and ideas imbibed by the young people were confirmed and corrected through experience in active work, and which rendered valuable service to the community.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING DURING THE WEEK

In their use of weekday religious education and the daily vacation Bible school, united churches so far as they undertook such work followed for the most part the methods in general use. Yet attention may be called to several peculiarities. United churches found an easier approach to a broader public. The ministers of such churches had uncommonly little difficulty in obtaining opportunities to teach religion in the public schools. Certain united churches in communities with other Protestant churches endeavored to make their weekday religious training of both these kinds a union effort in which all the local churches coöperated. One church, failing to accomplish this, took pains to draw into its daily vacation Bible school children from the Sunday schools of each of the other churches.

EVANGELISM

Two factors combined to make it comparatively easy for united churches to attract new members. In the first place,

they were able to tap sources of membership not touched by denominational churches of the traditional type. Many business or professional people, for example, who would not have thought of becoming Baptists or Presbyterians, were open to the appeal, "Join the Union Church," or "Join the Community Church." Another advantage lay in the new beginning, which both inspired church workers to special efforts toward enlisting recruits, and at the same time rendered the church unusually attractive to outsiders.

A considerable number of united churches, moreover, were in places where for some years previous to union the local churches had been comparatively inactive, so that people had begun to realize what church services and a resident minister contribute to the common life. In one such place it was reported that "people were just hungry" for religion. Here there was an old-time revival, and one hundred and twenty persons were received into the church on a single occasion. During the first year after union it was not unusual for the united church to make considerable gain in membership.

EVANGELISTIC SERVICES

Several churches held evangelistic services during the first months of their combined existence; and some of these resulted in conversions and in additions to the church. One Methodist minister of an undenominational church, after conducting a series of services, received 104 persons on one Sunday and others later. The following year the same minister tried to hold another series of services, with the aid of a professional evangelist. The result was disappointing. The people complained that they did not like "hurrah-bang methods." Moreover, the psychological moment had passed, during which those most easily won to the new enterprise had been drawn in.

PERSONAL WORK

In reply to the question of the schedule, "What is the church doing toward the evangelization of the community?"

though series of evangelistic meetings were sometimes mentioned, there was more frequent reference to "personal evangelism." On one schedule the words "organized, persistent, intelligent" were added. The personal work was more commonly performed by the pastor. Several churches, however, gave a share in it to local church workers. A method adopted by a western church was called "visitation day." The plan was that every home and every ranch should be visited on a given Sunday by a church-member or a church family. Literature explaining the principles and aims of the church was provided for distribution. The fact that this church was alone in its community made the approach to strangers easy.

Guardianship of Morals

Some unions had been occasioned by the economic pressure exerted by a flood of irreligion that had arisen unheeded in the community while divided religious forces competed with one another. Such united churches naturally confronted unwholesome conditions and even serious moral evils. Some of these churches, or more frequently their ministers, endeavored to arouse the public conscience.

In applying the usual methods of doing this—such as preaching, religious education, and pastoral work—there was evident a tendency, apparently connected with the tolerant spirit prerequisite to union, to give the general public an opportunity to draw their own conclusions in the light of a full and fair presentation of the whole matter in question. One minister, for example, feeling that the whole moral tone of his community was poisoned by frequent public dances held under questionable conditions, advertised that at a certain evening service he would preach on dancing. The church was crowded, there being present even a retired Lutheran minister that had never before attended a service in that church. The sermon set forth, first, the advantages of dancing, and then the disadvantages involved in it when conducted under unfavorable conditions. After presenting the facts required for a clear understanding of the problem

the preacher stopped, leaving each hearer to draw his own moral.

A similar result was aimed at by a different method at a place in the far West where a "Forty-Niner Camp" had just been held. This institution reproduced for a few days the wide-open conditions of the gold seekers' camps, community authorities shutting their eyes temporarily to frank disregard of all law. One Sunday evening soon after, the matter was taken up at the Young People's League of the church. A judge residing in the community was present at the request of the minister to make clear the legal aspects of the situation. A committee formed of representatives of the church and of the league prepared the following petition:

> Whereas, Our American civilization is dependent on law and order, we request the Board of Trustees of the City not to allow any organization to come in under any guise whatever in which violation of city ordinance or state and national laws is involved. We individually pledge ourselves to the enforcement of the law.

At a place where conditions were so bad that drunken men were arrested at public dances and the reëlection of a judge was defeated because in spite of threats he continued to cause such arrests, the community church brought about the formation of a Law Enforcement League. This organization arranged mass meetings and circulated petitions in an energetic effort to correct the evils, although without success.

Some united churches conducted their campaigns so vigorously that they aroused the opposition of the interests they opposed.

Secular Ministries

IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

In many a small place without any other church or social agency a united church was found to be the center of community life. In an open-country community of the Middle West, for example, where for years three churches had been unable to support services, a consolidation of the three

as a denominational united church transformed the whole situation. One of the churches that surrendered its denominational connection freely gave its church building as a "white Christmas gift," with the approval of its overhead authorities, to the church with which it was uniting. This building, greatly enlarged and improved, became the scene of many activities, secular as well as religious, including the meetings of farm organizations and of a health clinic. An extra church building was used for athletics, and once a year for a community fair. It was the general opinion that the united church had raised the whole moral and social level of community life.

In another small community with but one church, a few Episcopalians, all belonging to only five families, asked the bishop to come and start an Episcopal church. At a community mass meeting, the bishop being present, the minister of the existing church, which was Presbyterian, explained a plan for putting that church on a community basis. The bishop, realizing the folly of dividing the forces of so small a place, refused to enter the field. By 1924 the church consisted of 180 associate members and 156 regular members; and the associate members had an equal share in voting rights and in church work. Through community discussions fostered by this church the roads had been greatly improved; an excellent water supply had been provided for the community; moving pictures were shown weekly; a packing house was used in winter as a gymnasium under the supervision of trained volunteers; a local high school had been started; and in the season of migrant workers special moving pictures had been offered and a school for the children of the migrants had been attempted.

IN LARGER COMMUNITIES

Where secular tasks were already in the hands of special agencies, as was the case in most larger communities, the part undertaken by the majority of united churches was cordial coöperation, either officially, through the making of announcements, and sometimes through contributions from

the church treasury; or unofficially, through work done and the leadership furnished by church-members and pastors; or indirectly, by stimulating the spirit of brotherhood and of service.

The minister of a certain united church, to be sure, believing strongly in the social gospel, on coming to a community where welfare activities were already conducted through secular agencies, endeavored to transfer responsibility for these tasks to his church. The effort resulted in antagonizing leaders who were already working for the ends the minister desired and whose coöperation he needed.

As a rule, however, community churches and their ministers confined their formal social activities to fields in which needed work was not being done. Sometimes they achieved their end by starting a secular organization designed to perform the task. Agencies initiated through the influence of united churches included farm organizations, parent-teacher associations, scout troops and campfires, clinics, and community welfare associations. Some of these organizations, such as troops of Boy Scouts, were supervised by the church. Others were from the start entirely independent agencies. In certain communities where there already existed agencies with activities that overlapped or conflicted, a community church or its minister had taken the lead in the formation of a coördinating agency composed of representatives from the existing organizations and designed to help them all to work together more effectively for the common welfare.

Some united churches felt that under existing conditions certain social needs could best be met by the church itself. One such need was that of wholesome recreation for the young. Responsibility in this matter was assumed by the church, in some places, in order to counteract the attraction of commercial amusements of a demoralizing nature, and in other places to keep leadership in the matter away from an element not trusted by church leaders to maintain sufficiently high standards.

Very many united churches with a superfluous church building adapted it to serve some need particularly pressing in their particular environments. Many such buildings,

under the name "community house," were fitted for basket ball and other forms of athletics; or for moving pictures, amateur plays, and public meetings; or for dinners and social affairs; or for use as reading rooms. The spirit in which some united churches devoted a church building to social uses was well expressed in the following dedicatory pledge, used at the formal opening of large and attractive rooms in the basement of a federated church:

> We the officers and members and friends of the United Church assembled on the second day of December, 1920, do hereby express our earnest desire that these social rooms may be fittingly dedicated to and used for the upbuilding of the cause of Christ and the spread of His spirit of Brotherly Love. We dedicate these rooms to . . . the proclamation of the Gospel in terms of friendship and goodwill toward all men, in terms of a finer understanding of each other and a more sympathetic appreciation of our neighbors and the good they possess. We dedicate these rooms to the service of little children . . . to the well being of all young people who may come here . . . to the strengthening of the manhood and womanhood of the men and women. . . .

Two of the churches surveyed had attempted to conduct social programs, but had ended by turning over the work to secular agencies. One of the two tried to run moving pictures, but could not make them pay because the public preferred films of a different character from those the church thought it best to present. This church surrendered the enterprise to a men's civil league, which conducted it at a profit. Another church, organized at the very beginning of the existence of a young community, built a great community house and attempted there under the direction of a church staff many complicated social activities. Partly through poor financial management and partly because the community desired more popular recreation than the church provided, the plan was abandoned; and an amusement association was organized to assume responsibility for all social activities. This organization took over the community building, except for certain hours during which it was reserved by the church for its own activities.

Parallel experiences had brought to leaders of other united churches the conviction that the church can wisely under-

take needed secular ministries only where and so long as there are no specialized agencies to assume responsibility for them; and that where specialized agencies do exist the function of the church is to diffuse a spirit of brotherhood and of service and to enlighten the conscience and the judgment of social leaders.

Through quiet methods of religious education and evangelism, through guardianship of public morals and through various secular ministries—sometimes performed by the church itself but oftener accomplished indirectly through specialized agencies—many a community once estranged from its several competing churches, was gradually being brought into friendly relations with the united church.

Chapter XIV

OTHER CHURCHES

Many a united church confronted some problem relating to other churches, actual or projected, in the same community. Should it be the only church in the community? If there were other churches, what should be its attitude toward them? If it was not the only church, should it adopt the title "Community Church"?

The solution of these problems did not rest entirely within the control of the united churches. Conditions varied from locality to locality. Even in the same community individual opinions often differed as to what was desirable or practicable. In many places the situation was observed to be in process of change. No more will be attempted here than to present, in all its inconsistency and inconclusiveness, the actual position of united churches in 1924 in regard to these three problems.

Whether Alone or Not

Regarding the first problem, the united church alone or in the presence of other churches, this chapter will present four groups of facts. It will show:

How many united churches were the only churches in their respective communities.

How many were in the presence of other churches belonging to each of six types of denominations.

What denominational types were represented in formal unions.

How the churches outside a united church were related in denominational types to the elements within the united church.

The first two groups of facts relate to 483 united churches

situated in villages, in hamlets or in the open country, and about which it was learned whether or not they were the only churches in their respective communities.[1] These 483 united churches constitute a sample of slightly more than half of the 941 village, hamlet, and open-country united churches discovered in 1924.

NUMBER ALONE IN COMMUNITY

Of the 483 churches, 217, or 44.9 per cent., served their fields alone, there being in their respective communities no other church of any kind. The proportion of churches thus alone was highest for those of the denominational type of union, a little more than half of which, 51.2 per cent.,[2] were alone. Of the federated churches, two-fifths, and of the undenominational churches, just about one-third were the only churches in their respective communities.

NUMBER WITH OTHER CHURCHES

In 266 communities, on the other hand, united churches were in the presence of other churches. These situations were classified according to the types of denominations of the other churches in the same community.[3]

[1] The information was obtained for some united churches through surveys or mail schedules; and for churches in a few states from state manuals or gazetteers. For these churches the denominations of all neighbor churches were learned. In other cases, through consultation of the annuals of six denominations publishing statistics regarding local churches—each of these denominations having many churches widely scattered—it was learned whether or not a church of one or more of these denominations existed in the same community with the united church in question. The absence of information regarding the location of the churches of many denominations affected the data in two ways: More of the situations where there was at least one other church could be identified than of the situations where there was no other church. The figures for the number of other churches of the different types are minimum figures, not precise ones; and comparisons of these figures would not be significant.

[2] One reason for the comparatively high proportion is that, in making the list of united churches, pains were taken to exclude denominational churches in competitive situations, except where their character as united churches was fully substantiated, as, for example, where they had originated through the consolidation of existing churches.

[3] The grouping of denominations is that used in *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, p. 110.

When a united church was in the presence of churches of more than

Of the 483 united churches, at least 119 were in the same communities with Catholic churches. Fifty were in the presence of no other church except the Catholic church, so that 267, or 55.3 per cent., were the only Protestant churches in their communities.

At least thirty-five united churches were in the presence of churches ministering to groups of foreign-born, many of which conducted their services in a foreign language.

Forty-five or more united churches each shared a field with either a Lutheran or an Episcopal or a Reformed church, or, in one case, with churches of two of these denominations; that is, with one or more churches which in the classification adopted were characterized as "liturgical."

Eighty-five united churches had as neighbors one or more immersionist churches of the following denominations: Adventist, Northern Baptist, Christian, Church of Christ, and Disciples of Christ.

Seventy-five united churches were in the presence of churches of Protestant denominations not included under the types already considered, and grouped in the classification followed as "all other Protestant churches." This group of denominations included, for example, the Methodist bodies and the Presbyterian bodies.

Churches from one or more of all six of these classes of denominations, accordingly, were present in the same communities with united churches, thus proving the existence in such communities of corresponding elements of the population that had not been absorbed in the united churches. The relative frequency with which elements of the different classes of denominations were present but unabsorbed could not be estimated on account of the incompleteness of the information. The data in hand make it clear, however, not only that many united churches were in the presence of Catholic or foreign-language churches, the need for which is

one of the denominational types, it was taken into account in more than one of the following statements, so that the figures overlap. But when a given united church was in the presence of a church that might have been considered as belonging to more than one type of denomination, the situation was counted only once. A foreign language church of a liturgical denomination was counted as a foreign language church, but not as a liturgical church.

generally recognized, but that many were in the same community with liturgical churches, with emotional churches, with immersionist churches, and even with churches of the "other Protestant" group.

DENOMINATIONS REPRESENTED

Members had come to united churches from not fewer than fifty denominations, representing each of the six types, even including the Catholic Church. But in the membership of any one united church, the representation from any one denomination would for most of the different types of denominations be very small. Groups strong enough to have formed churches that formally became parts of united churches, belonged, as has been shown in earlier chapters,[4] almost exclusively to two denominational types. They were either of the immersionist type, represented chiefly by Northern Baptist churches, or of what is called in this book the numerically predominant type [5] of denominations, which was represented in unions chiefly by Congregational, Methodist Episcopal, and Northern Presbyterian churches. The churches of these two types, it has also been shown, were in the large majority of unions combined in one of two ways: either immersionist elements with elements of the predominant type, or predominant elements with other predominant elements.

The types of denominations of the elements of united churches will now be considered in connection with the types of denominations of neighboring churches. This inquiry will be based for the most part on the facts concerning 167 federated churches for which the requisite information was available.[6]

Seventy-five of the 167 federated churches included an

[4] See pages 40, 64, 84 and 99.

[5] See page 40.

[6] The investigation was limited to federated churches partly because for them official information was available concerning the denominational composition as it actually was in 1923-24; and partly because federated churches were far more numerous than were formal unions of organized churches belonging to either of the other two types.

immersionist unit; and ten, or about one-eighth of the total number, were in the presence of another immersionist church. All but two of the federated churches included one or more units of the predominant type of denominations; and thirty-eight, or between one-fifth and one-fourth, were in the presence of at least one other church of the predominant type. That is, the proportion of churches of denominations of the predominant type that competed with a similar element within a united church was larger than the proportion of churches of immersionist denominations so competing. This difference is natural, considering that denominations of the predominant type are considerably more numerous than immersionist denominations, and that they have among them a far greater number of town and country churches.

The proportion of federated churches in the presence of other churches of the same denominational type as one or more of their units, showed no marked variation from region to region. There seemed to be a connection, however, between such competition and size of community. Few of the cases, naturally, were in hamlets or in the open country. They might be expected to be more common in larger villages than in those having fewer people to support churches; but of the thirty-eight communities where a church of the predominant type was in the presence of a federation with a predominant unit, twenty-three—that is, decidedly more than half—belonged to the class of small villages with a population of less than 1,000, where the American Village Study found there were more than half again as many churches in proportion to population as in larger villages. Only thirteen cases of this form of competition were ascertained to be in villages with more than 1,000 inhabitants;[7] and in four of these villages a federated church combining an immersionist element and an element of the predominant type was in the presence both of an immersionist church and of one of the predominant kind.

[7] It was not learned whether the population of one of the villages was over or under 1,000.

Seventy-three of the 167 federated churches had both an immersionist unit and one of the predominant type. Of these federated churches including units of both types, over half were the only churches in their communities; while of those composed either of units of the predominant type only or of immersionist units only, one-third were the only churches in their communities; the federated churches having elements of both types being therefore the only churches in a comparatively high proportion of communities.

In thirty-three communities a Congregational, a Methodist or a Presbyterian church was in the presence of a federated church containing a unit of one or another of these three denominations. Of the churches outside the federations, thirty-three were Methodist Episcopal, four were Presbyterian and one was Congregational.

Twenty-three communities having united churches representing all types had also one or more organized churches of the very same denomination as a unit or as a considerable element of the united church itself. Eight of the twenty-three united churches were denominational churches; five were federated churches; and ten were undenominational churches. All the competing churches had been in existence before the union. At least twelve had continued their activity, losing part of their members to the united church; seven or more had ceased holding services for a time but had resumed them later. Ten of the strictly denominational churches in these peculiarly competitive situations were of immersionist denominations; fifteen were of non-immersionist denominations.

Realignment

In most instances a denominational church competing with an element of its own denomination within a united church had included before union two groups having divergent theological opinions, one element being in general more conservative than the other. As union obviously implied a willingness to minimize theological differences, many conservative persons shrank from entering united churches.

Therefore the formation of unions often started a process of realignment. Sometimes the most conservative of the original churches, preserving its existence, attracted either as supporters or as workers, and occasionally even as members, the more conservative members of the various churches that united; while at the same time it often lost to the united church the less conservative of its former constituents. For example, in one village where there had been four churches —Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Universalist—when the last three combined as an undenominational church, the Baptist church lost a few members to the new community church and gained a larger number of constituents from among the more conservative Methodists and Presbyterians, thus becoming a far stronger working force than before. Each side felt that the new grouping had resulted in greater harmony and more adequate service for both elements; and relations were more friendly than while there had been four churches. The local people sometimes applied to the two groups the terms Fundamentalist and Modernist; but more often the reality existed without being formulated in words.

Even when conservative persons were not numerous enough or not aggressive enough to have a church of their own, there were frequently individuals too little in sympathy with the united church to accept its religious ministrations. Many of these persons stopped attending the church altogether. While thus adrift they were susceptible to the approaches of groups preferring an emotional type of religious experience. All over the United States these groups, it was learned through the American Village Study, had rapidly been gaining influence, being commended to many by their earnest and evangelistic spirit and by their use of biblical language. More than one denominational superintendent declared that in his experience the organization of a united church was regularly accompanied by the loss of individuals to such groups, whose influence he considered dangerous to spiritual welfare. In a certain community visited, for instance, an emotional group was dividing and bewildering the members of a united church; and in another place Holy Rollers had actually split up a union of several

churches. Twenty-one united churches were reported as having in their communities groups of the emotional type; and as these faiths do not publish statistics, the total number in the communities with the united churches of the sample was undoubtedly larger.

Even the particular denominations that had many churches entered in formal unions, had other churches that remained outside united churches in the same community, or that entered unions and later separated from them. This was found true, for example, for the Methodist Episcopal Church, the denomination that had far the greatest number of town and country churches in the field studied. Methodist units formed parts of 178 federated churches, that is, of more than half the total number discovered in 1924; and Methodist Episcopal churches had also been involved in the formation of more than half the consolidated churches. Yet, on the other hand, thirty-three Methodist churches were in the same communities as federated churches that had each a unit of the predominant type; and forty-three Methodist churches had temporarily been units of federated churches that were dissolved later. Whether a religious element of the community was to be within or without a united church was evidently affected by factors operating in some situations but not in others.

Judging from the data that have now been brought together regarding the presence or absence of other churches in the same community with a united church, the factors most important in 1924 in determining whether or not the united church was to be alone in its community were these:

The denominational types represented in the population by considerable groups.

The size of community.

Realignments of religious forces.

Peculiar features of individual situations.

Attitude Toward Other Churches

Although united churches, by the very act of uniting, had obviously abjured the spirit of sectarian rivalry as among

their own elements, a considerable number of them, with the professed intention of uniting all the local religious forces, tried to supplant other churches in the community. Some of them had been influenced by articles from leaders in the movement toward union, which assumed the "community church" to be as a matter of course the only church in its community. Others were familiar with a few places where a united church actually was alone, and took for granted that this condition was general. When a union project originally included a church that decided to maintain its separate existence, strained relations sometimes resulted. The keenness of the competition shown by some united churches is illustrated by the situation in a village in California. The local paper, sympathizing with the majority, which was in the united church, refused to print notices of the other church, which was Methodist; and at school Methodist children were sent to Coventry. Again, in a place where a few years after the union of all the Protestant forces, an Episcopal church had been organized, some members of the Community Church threatened to boycott any storekeeper that should join the new church.

Some united churches met similar rivalry from one or more churches outside the union. For example, a Baptist church, losing a considerable group of its members to a new united church that combined also two other local churches, not only put up a community building and conducted a lively program of social activities, but carried the war into the lodges; one result being that a Baptist who had joined the united church was blackballed by the Masons. In this case, and in many others, the local people declared that the opposition to the united church was backed by denominational officials; and the reports were sometimes confirmed by these officials themselves.

The hostility was occasionally mutual. In a place where a vigorous attempt was made to unite all the churches, the union actually achieved consisted of one church and individuals from three others. The new church on the one side and at least two of the reduced denominational churches on the other did their best to win attendants and members at the

expense of the opposite side; and the feelings and language of either side towards the other were decidedly bitter. In some cases each side was sure it was in the right, the one being loyal to a beloved denomination and the other to the ideal of Christian union. Cases of the kind existed; and because they furnished good copy, they received so much publicity that they were believed to be more common than they really were.

In a number of communities where the original union was the affair of only two among several churches, friendly relations were observed to exist between the united church and its neighbor churches, which coöperated in the usual ways.

In not a few places, moreover, the united church, after some years, drew an additional church into the union. Eight federations of two units each in different parts of the United States were joined after a lapse of from one to thirteen years by local churches of a third denomination. Though for the other types of union successive increments were more apt to be gradual and therefore less easily traced, one consolidated church and two undenominational churches were ascertained to have attracted each an additional organized element.

Use of Title—"Community Church"

Of the denominational and undenominational united churches for which the presence or absence of other churches in the community was known, all those ascertained to use the title "Community Church," which numbered 114, were distributed according to whether or not they were in the same community with other churches of any kind, with other Protestant churches, and with churches of the same class of denominations.[8]

Of the 242 denominational united churches that were considered in the earlier part of this chapter, sixty-nine, or something more than one-fourth, used the title "Com-

[8] Some of the churches not included in this sample had other names; for others the title was not learned. Federated churches were left out of account because comparatively few of them used the title.

munity Church." Of the sixty-nine, twenty-six were the only churches in their respective communities, and forty-eight were the only Protestant churches. Only nine, or about one-eighth of the number, were in a community in which there was a church of a denomination of the same type. One reason why so few denominational united churches not alone in the community adopted the title, was that the practice was discountenanced by certain state home-missions councils, a fact that naturally had a comparatively strong influence on united churches of this type.

Of the seventy-four undenominational churches, it was ascertained that forty-five, or about three-fifths, used the title "Community Church." Seventeen of these forty-five were alone in their respective communities, and twenty-four were the only Protestant churches. On the other hand, nineteen, or more than two-fifths, were each in the presence of another church either of the predominant type or of the immersionist type.

The title "Community Church," therefore, was used by a considerably larger percentage of undenominational churches than of denominational united churches—two-thirds as compared with something more than one-fourth. But of the denominational united churches using the title, only about one-eighth were in the presence of other churches of the same class of denominations, while of the undenominational churches adopting the name, two-fifths were in the presence either of an immersionist church or of a church of the numerically predominant type.

The use of the title "Community Church" by churches in the presence of churches of similar denominations sometimes, though not always, originated in an attempt at union that had been only partly successful.

Chapter XV

BENEVOLENCES

United churches of all types were comparatively weak in benevolences, having a small average expenditure, a small per capita contribution, and a low proportion of total expenditure, devoted to benevolences. Among churches of the three types, federated churches made the best record. They devoted to benevolences a comparatively high proportion of their total expenditure, and although the per capita contribution was low, the average expenditure for benevolences was higher than that prevailing for town and country churches of the Twenty-five Counties. On all three points many federated churches made a better showing than had the denominational churches composing them during the year before union, 167 federated churches giving in 1923-24 two-thirds as much again as had their elements during the year before union. On the whole, however, united churches of all types contributed comparatively little to the world-wide Christian program.

The deficiency was partly accounted for by two unusual circumstances. In the first place, the amounts expended by united churches in Christian service within their own communities were often comparatively large. Secondly, most published statistics concerning benevolences included only sums contributed to denominational agencies; whereas part of the benevolences of some united churches were sent to undenominational or to interdenominational causes.

Even taking into account, however, both local benefactions and contributions to interdenominational and undenominational causes, united churches in general were not strong in benevolences.

Difficulties

To the comparatively poor achievement of united churches in missionary giving several factors contributed. To begin with, many unions had been hastened by poverty; and even after combining forces the people did not consider themselves able to contribute largely to outside causes. Again, many of these denominational churches had not been educated to give. These two factors often worked together. For example, one of the three churches that united to form a certain undenominational church had been trained in benevolences under vigorous denominational leadership, but the second had contributed virtually nothing to missions; and the third, never a missionary church, had been inactive during the six or seven years immediately before union. Many united churches, moreover, had arisen out of a local revolt against competitive denominationalism; and some such churches refused to contribute to denominational campaigns lest the money be spent in home-mission aid to competitive churches. Moreover, secular leaders drawn into united churches by the new program had usually not been trained in giving to missions and were frequently even opposed to missionary activities in general.

Finally, the denominational loyalty that forms one of the strongest incentives to benevolence for strictly denominational churches was entirely lacking for the undenominational churches and for the undenominational membership of many federated churches. Federated churches as such, because of their divided allegiance, could usually invoke this motive only with great caution. Even among denominational united churches and affiliated churches, connected though they were, either closely or loosely, with but a single denomination, the presence of elements of other origins interfered with appeals to denominational spirit.

Undenominational churches

These factors telling against benevolences affected in a particularly high degree united churches of the undenomina-

tional type. Many of them had arisen in communities where competition had estranged people from denominations; not a few were still encountering opposition from rival denominational churches; an unusually large proportion of their leaders were unexperienced in the ways of denominational churches; and whatever might be the traditions of individual members, the church organizations stood quite apart from denominational influences and were untouched by denominational loyalty. Moreover, the leaders of some undenominational churches frankly admitted that one reason for their choice of that type of union had been that they might escape paying assessments for overhead denominational expenses and for missionary programs.

In the light of these considerations it is not to be wondered at that all the averages regarding benevolences for undenominational churches were exceptionally low.

FEDERATED CHURCHES

Federated churches, too, had their own peculiar difficulties. In the first place, because denominational supervision was divided, denominational overhead authorities were hampered in presenting and in pushing their campaigns. Furthermore, the ministers of federated churches were rarely familiar with the missionary activities of the denominations other than their own that were represented among their parishioners; and they also dreaded seeming to show partisanship for the agencies of their own denominations. Finally, many federated churches had developed a desire to minimize whatever tended to recall their separate origins and interests.

The policies of united churches in relation to their benevolences concerned, first, the methods whereby they raised benevolent funds; secondly, their choice of agencies to which to send benevolences for distribution; and finally, the means they adopted to obviate their peculiar difficulties.

Methods of Raising Money

INDIVIDUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

By many united churches of all types funds for benevolences were raised through individual subscriptions, provision for which was sometimes made in connection with an annual canvass for local expenditures. Of forty-four federated churches for which information was available as to the method of raising benevolence funds, thirty-eight used individual subscriptions paid either at one time or in installments. The canvassers for a certain federated church carried separate subscription sheets for local work, for the benevolences of each of the three elements, and for a local mission for foreign-born sponsored partly by this church.

A BUDGETED TOTAL

When benevolences were thus raised through individual subscriptions, the total aimed at was sometimes included in the budget. Other churches provided that individuals should subscribe an undistributed sum toward a budgeted total amount out of which the church as a whole appropriated the benevolences. By either plan the amount budgeted was sometimes the amount of a denominational apportionment, or, in the case of certain federated churches, the total of the different apportionments. Other churches budgeted for benevolences a specified sum, which was sometimes a definite proportion of their total expenditures, and sometimes an amount that previous experience made it appear practicable to raise. Sums obtained in this last way by federated churches were usually distributed to the denominations concerned either equally or in specified proportions.

A considerable number of federated churches that originally had raised their benevolence funds as separate units changed their method so as to raise coöperatively sums for benevolences that they afterwards divided in specified proportions.

COLLECTIONS

Some united churches, like many churches of the traditional kind, raised their benevolences through occasional or periodical collections. One federated church divided the collection taken the first Sunday of every month equally among the three denominations represented. For a few, the sole benevolences for the year were raised through collections taken after appeals by representatives of various causes. For other churches, special collections were combined with a systematic benevolence program.

INCOME FROM INVESTMENTS

Denominational assessments were paid by certain organized elements of a few federated and undenominational churches out of the income from funds owned by the denominational unit in question.

AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS

A few united churches followed the not uncommon practice of leaving responsibility, or most of it, for the benevolences of the church to the Sunday school or to the women's missionary societies. To women's societies this responsibility was consigned by a considerable number of federated churches having such organizations for the separate units. The women raised the money sometimes through sales or suppers, sometimes through dues or contributions. Several united women's societies also raised missionary money through sales, the proceeds being evenly divided. Of thirty-five federated churches with missionary societies, twenty-two had joint organizations and thirteen had separate societies for the denominational units.

Among these methods, leaders of united churches found, first, individual missionary subscriptions and, second, appropriation by the church from total receipts, to be the most effective. Personal subscriptions were considered more useful in developing missionary interest and in establishing the habit

of missionary giving. The inclusion of a total sum for benevolences in the budget, on the other hand, was found more certain to produce the sum that was apportioned or that was desired. Several churches had changed their method from individual subscriptions to joint appropriations.

Choice of Benevolent Agencies

United churches made their contributions to causes outside the local community either chiefly or wholly to denominational boards; or chiefly or wholly through undenominational or interdenominational agencies. Some of the churches contributing through denominational boards did so mainly or exclusively through the boards of a single denomination; others, through the boards of two or more denominations.

Agencies of a single denomination

The united churches distributing all their official benevolences through the agencies of a single denomination included denominational united churches in general and most affiliated churches. The minister of a German Reformed church in which had been merged a Methodist church, explained to his parishioners that those making subscriptions toward the benevolences of that church would be forwarding Christian work in the world at large through the agencies of the Reformed denomination. Two-thirds of the contributors, in making out their subscription blanks, put down sums for benevolences; and those failing to do so, the treasurer said, were none of them Methodists. Many churches among both denominational united churches and affiliated churches felt that the denomination with which they were connected had established a claim upon them through a grant made by its building society toward the erection of a building. Others felt they were indebted to the overhead body for a supply of reliable ministers, for the fellowship enjoyed by these ministers and also, in the case of certain denominations, for the minister's assurance of a pension. Some affiliated churches had agreed, as one part of their

understanding with the overhead body with which they were connected, that all their official benevolences should be contributed through agencies of the denomination.

Some united churches had permitted or even urged individual subscribers to apply their personal benevolent contributions to the fulfillment of pledges given in denominational campaigns before union and calling for payments over a period of years. A certain Presbyterian church that had enlarged its scope, though it still remained affiliated with the Presbyterian denomination, assumed responsibilities toward the New Era Movement that had been undertaken by the church as previously organized.

AGENCIES OF TWO OR MORE DENOMINATIONS

Although churches allied with denominations officially sent their main contributions to the agencies of the denomination whose name they bore, many of them from the beginning of their existence as united churches had offered to transmit the subscriptions of individuals to the agencies of any other denomination. Some churches made provision for entering such destinations on the subscription blanks. Several churches surveyed had actually forwarded contributions to the boards of several denominations. The treasurers of other churches granting the opportunity, however, stated that no one had ever availed himself of it.

Many united churches having a strong representation from two or more denominations distributed their benevolent contributions among the agencies of both or all of the denominations concerned. This arrangement was adopted by nearly all federated churches; and it was in use for a few affiliated churches and for a number of undenominational churches.

Affiliated Churches

A few churches originally affiliated with a single denomination had connected themselves officially also with one or two others. These churches contained informal groups, each provided with a treasurer of benevolences, which regularly

sent benevolences to the boards of the respective denominations.

Undenominational Churches

Of twenty-five undenominational churches reporting through a schedule on missionary contributions, nine divided their contributions among the agencies of the denominations most largely represented in the membership, distribution being in some cases in equal parts, in some cases roughly according to numbers; and six reported gifts to missions without stating whether or not these missions were denominational. An arrangement in force for several undenominational churches was that the benevolences should all go to the board of the denomination to which belonged the minister for the time being, the destination changing with each alteration in the denomination of the minister. A detailed resolution providing for such a procedure was prepared by the minister of an undenominational church in the far West, and was submitted by him to the presbytery, by which it was informally approved.

Federated Churches

Each unit of the earliest federated churches raised its benevolences independently, sending them to the boards of its own denomination precisely as before union. This method was still in force among many federated churches. The units of such churches had separate treasurers for benevolences and separate collectors.

Another plan was to appropriate for the missions of each denominational unit a specific proportion of the amounts contributed through subscription by the members of the respective units.

Separate subscriptions under unified supervision were provided for in the constitution of one federated church as follows:

> The benevolences of the federating churches shall be printed together on a card or envelope, those of each church in a separate

column so that a subscriber, in making his subscription, shall be able to designate the cause or institution to which he desires to subscribe. All money for benevolences shall be paid to the treasurer by the secretary of the board of managers, who shall keep an accurate account and pay the same to the cause or institution to which it belongs.

According to another method the federated church raised funds for benevolences as a joint task and distributed them to the denominations concerned. The distribution among denominations was usually in proportion to the membership of the denominational units, or roughly in proportion to their respective contributions. By a number of federated churches, however, the weaker element was allowed to dispose of a proportion of the total benevolences equal to that assigned to the stronger, or at least of a generously calculated share.

A question regarding whether the units of federated churches met their denominational assessments was answered on fifty-eight schedules. Of seventeen churches it was reported that both or all the units paid their assessments in full; and of nineteen, that both or all paid 50 per cent. or more of their assessments. Of fourteen churches one unit, but not the other, paid 50 per cent. or more; for only eight churches did both units pay less than 50 per cent.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL AND UNDENOMINATIONAL CAUSES

Many undenominational churches and some federated churches with a large undenominational membership made their benevolent contributions chiefly or even wholly through interdenominational and undenominational agencies. Such causes, including philanthropic agencies, were named on schedules as objects of benevolence by thirty undenominational churches. Among interdenominational objects were included state federations of churches, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and ten undenominational missions, each named by a single church. Among undenominational agencies were named several missions, such as Canton Christian College, and a few undenominational churches, such as the one in the Canal Zone. More

commonly mentioned, however, were philanthropic causes. Among the latter the Near East Relief was in the lead, being named by twelve churches; the Red Cross came next; and scattering mention was made of various orphanages, hospitals, and a college or two, these institutions being for the most part near at hand.

LOCAL OBJECTS

Some united churches of all types, like churches in general, provided for a deacon's fund, or made similar arrangement for administering local relief. One church gave $600 annually toward the support of a mission for a foreign-born group.

Meeting Characteristic Difficulties

Many leaders of united churches, being desirous that their people should miss neither a share in the Christianizing of the world nor the enlargement of the heart that they believed would result from personal missionary giving, and recognizing at the same time that the motives in force for strictly denominational churches did not affect united churches so powerfully, appealed to several other motives.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL SPIRIT

United churches of all types, even including the denominational united churches and the affiliated churches because they were composed of members from different denominational origins, did not as a rule present the missionary program of one denomination alone and disregard the achievements of all other religious bodies. They showed a general purpose to present the missionary program of the world, by whatever denominations it was executed, as one whole. Toward this aim they used one of two methods, chosen according to the type of union. One way was to present for study and as objects for contributions the work of the denominations represented in the local organization. The other was to make their composite constituency feel that the official de-

nomination, being one of the great Christian bodies, was carrying on a part of the great program, so that all constituents of the local church, whether or not they had been originally of that denomination, could have a share, through its agencies, in the missionary work of the Christian Church.

As texts for mission study united churches sometimes selected interdenominational publications and sometimes those of a single denomination. Slides, propaganda, lectures, and so on were obtained by some ministers from interdenominational sources and by others from denominational agencies, many availing themselves of the resources both of several denominations and of interdenominational agencies as well. Several ministers delivered lectures on the missionary work of different denominations. A certain federated church placed in the vestibule two bulletin boards, one for the publicity material of the Presbyterian boards, the other for that of the Methodist boards; and the members of the two units showed equal interest in the posters of both denominations. The women in combined missionary societies frequently developed interest in each other's missionaries.

The attempt to arouse sympathy for more than one denomination was most common where the elements combined had been churches previously organized.

ANTI-DENOMINATIONAL SPIRIT

A few undenominational churches capitalized the antipathy felt by part of their constituency toward denominational bodies and all their activities, in order to raise funds for interdenominational or for undenominational causes. That this motive had thus far proved comparatively ineffective was shown to be probable by the low averages for benevolences of undenominational churches in comparison with those of the other types of union.

LOYALTY TO FORM OF UNION

Several federated churches appealed to the motive of loyalty to the interests of their own form of church union.

For example, the chairman of an executive committee of a certain federated church included in his annual letter to the members of the congregation the following sentence: "It is of great importance to our plan of organization [that is, to federation] just now that we meet our denominational expectations in a reasonable fashion and gain the confidence of those who are over us." This church included the amount of the combined apportionments in the budget; and when the amount contributed fell below the apportionment, the church raised the sum by borrowing money.

A comparable loyalty to the undenominational community church was found effective by several of these organizations in raising money for their local welfare program. The minister of one church said of his people: "They feel that making the Community Church go is their mission work more than is any other line. For that reason, they turn more money toward local work. They have turned their faces toward the future and are winning out."

ADOPTION OF FIELDS AND WORKERS

A strong undenominational church after several experiments decided to appeal to personal interest and to the sense of obligation for meeting responsibilities once assumed, by adopting specific fields, the church paying the salary of particular workers. This method was of course not peculiar to united churches; but reference to it is made here because for that church, and in a minor degree for a number of other united churches, it formed a happy solution for the difficulties of united churches regarding benevolences. This church adopted a Congregational mission in China and a Methodist southern mountain school; and in these fields the church and its auxiliaries paid the salaries of individual workers and students. Through the Baptist State Convention the church paid the home-missionary appropriation for two weak Baptist churches in its county. In its own community the church aided two foreign-language churches, helping one of them regularly through its own board.

From workers on the distant fields the church received

frequent letters; and not only were these read at church services, but striking extracts were circulated among the households by means of a parish letter. Interest was further stimulated through the use of pictures, bulletins and curios. On several occasions a worker supported by the church addressed the congregation. The new policy resulted in a gain over the record of the previous year of 40 per cent. in the amount contributed, and of 75 per cent. in the number of subscribers through envelopes, which that year rose to 219.

In considering the small achievement of united churches in the field of benevolences, two facts must be taken into consideration. The first is that the movement toward local-church union was so new that there had been time neither to develop principles and programs, nor to perfect methods. The other is this: that the tentative principles and methods observed in 1924 had been evolved in great measure by isolated churches and ministers, largely without the advice of ecclesiastical experts and with little opportunity for conference with one another.

Summary

While united churches were centering their attention chiefly on objective problems connected with organization, property, benevolences and the like, the elements of diverse origins thus working together were developing new attitudes. A considerable number of united churches acquired a feeling of unity that was manifested in more closely knit forms of organization, and even by the pooling of their respective properties and the preparation of a common house of worship. They developed a sense of responsibility for their respective communities that had been lacking in the days of divided and competitive effort. Their members acquired a spirit of interdenominationalism which led them to avail themselves of devices for religious and missionary education from many denominational and interdenominational sources, and to distribute their contributions to missions through several denominational agencies.

PART IV

ADJUSTMENTS

PART IV: ADJUSTMENTS

Chapter XVI

ADJUSTMENTS BY THE DENOMINATIONS

The development of united churches, their variations, and the problems they confronted have been described in the foregoing chapters solely from the point of view of the united churches themselves. But these churches made their appearance in a world where the religious forces were already organized, and where religious procedure was to a great extent standardized. The final section of this book will show what means were taken by denominations on the one hand, and by interdenominational agencies on the other to coördinate the new phenomena with the established order. The present chapter will be devoted to the efforts toward this adjustment that were made by the denominations.

The Situation

It is necessary at the outset to see clearly why the rise of united churches occasioned difficulties for the denominations.

Denominations have existed separately for hundreds of years, during which time standardized forms of church organization have developed and machinery has been perfected for supervising the churches, for training ministers to care for them, and for bringing churches and ministers together. Before united churches were so much as thought of, the denominations had established missions in various part of the world, had equipped them with expensive buildings and had manned them with trained workers; and these extensive missionary enterprises could not be carried on without regular contributions from the churches.

And then, suddenly, the local churches of one denomination began to unite with those of one or more other denominations. Difficulties arose at once. Since the denominations had developed independently of one another, their manifold complicated machinery could not easily be adjusted to interlock. They suffered serious inconvenience in many ways.

For the laymen and leaders of each denomination, the beliefs, practices, constitution and world-wide program of that denomination had naturally become accepted realities built into the whole structure of their thoughts. This fact was well illustrated by an action taken in 1920 by the Presbyterian General Assembly in response to a "request in behalf of a federated church to extend rights. . . . to non-Presbyterian church members. . . ." The recommendation adopted was "that inasmuch as the granting of this request would involve unconstitutional action, no action be taken." Up to 1926 the constitution had not been changed to permit of action of the kind indicated.

Denominational spirit was particularly strong among denominational superintendents. One of these officials explained this somewhat as follows: "To strengthen Methodist churches is my work, my life." Another said, "I am paid to build up Baptist churches. It is my duty to do it, and my conscience is in favor of it." Each of these men, however, along with his devotion to the interests of his own denomination, had a sense of the great need in small, divided communities of uniting the religious forces. One of them said, "I try to think of the interests of the Church of Christ in general"; and the other was coöperating with other superintendents of his area in the formation and supervision of federated churches. But for many superintendents denominational interests remained supreme. Because without understanding their denominational loyalty it would be impossible to appreciate the policies of such men in relation to united churches, extracts from two characteristic letters, received in the course of this study from denominational superintendents of the Middle West, will be quoted here. The first is as follows:

> We have one or two denominational churches that are claiming to be Community Churches, but they are and of necessity must be Denominational to get anywhere. It is our sincerest belief that no church is now or can be more capable of taking care of the religious needs of [the state] than the one I serve. I am as liberal as any in my attitude to other Churches and feel most kindly to all but while the "fad" for Consolidation may be necessary for other Denominations, it is not for the Methodist. I am out and out a denominationalist but I trust wholly free from Sectarianism.

The other superintendent wrote:

> As I understand, the so-called community churches are simply a new denomination formed on the basis of the surrender of intelligent conviction concerning the teaching of the Scriptures and the nature of church organization and what it takes to constitute a church. Our Baptist people, therefore, are not interested in the various and sundry efforts to wipe out denominational lines and to belittle intelligent conviction concerning the teachings of the Scriptures. If at any time, anywhere, you should happen to find people who call themselves Baptists entering into movements for the organization of "Community Churches" you may know that they are uninformed concerning the fundamental beliefs of their denomination and are, therefore, not real Baptists.

When a denominational official to whom his denomination was the paramount reality, was confronted by a church that desired to unite with a church of another denomination, he naturally thought first of how such an event might endanger the welfare of the whole denomination, including its overhead machinery and its missionary enterprises. What was most real to him in the local situation was the denominational church, partly for its own sake, but still more as a necessary unit in the whole great denominational organism. When the local people talked of stopping waste and competition and of providing united and efficient service for the community as a whole, he regarded as a sign of narrowness their failure to appreciate large outside denominational interests; and he could not know that they in their turn ascribed his failure to sympathize with their desires to another kind of narrowness—that of sectarianism.

A favorable attitude toward union on the part of denominational leaders was most common, first, in sections where

denominational spirit had most markedly declined, and secondly, in districts where decline of rural communities had endangered not merely the well-being but even the existence of churches in competitive situations. The two conditions were often found together.

United churches occasioned overhead authorities the most embarrassment by the problems arising in their formative period; by those relating to organization and administration; and by problems having to do with property the title to which was held by overhead bodies; with ministerial supply; with supervision; with home-mission aid; with denominational statistics; and with benevolences.

Denominational problems and policies in relation to property have already been discussed. How these other problems affected the denominations, and what measures the denominations consequently adopted will now be considered.

The denominational agencies that were affected by the rise of united churches, and that took action concerning them, were of three kinds: legislative, supervisory and benevolent. The legislative agencies consisted of representative bodies both national and sectional—assemblies, conferences and the like. Supervisory agencies included not only the denominational superintendents directly in charge of the local churches, but any higher sectional officials, such as bishops, that had a part in determining policies put into effect by the superintendents. The benevolent agencies included both those supplementing ministers' salaries and those helping to finance the erection of buildings.

Attitudes Toward Union

Policies relating to the union of churches were formally adopted by a number of ecclesiastical legislative assemblies, sectional for some denominations, national for others. These policies were along the following general lines:

Opposition to union of any kind.

Advocacy of the denominational form of union exclusively.

Encouragement of the denominational type of union where

feasible, combined with acceptance of the federated church where union could be accomplished only in that form, and opposition to the undenominational church.

Encouragement of union in any form acceptable to the local people.

OPPOSITION TO UNION OF ANY KIND

The first policy, that of opposing all forms of union, while standing for the strictly denominational church, is well illustrated by the following resolutions, passed in 1922 by a sectional executive board:

> Whereas, the officers and employees of the [state] Baptist Convention are frequently called upon for advice as to the wisdom of organizing what is known as a "federated" church, or of advising the combination under some name of a Baptist Church with a church or churches of other denominations,
>
> Now, therefore, in order that the officers and employees of the [state] Baptist Convention may be guided in the performance of their duties, it is
>
> Resolved: That, while we fully recognize our interdenominational responsibilities and the real value of coöperative Christian effort, we re-affirm our conviction that as Baptists we have a distinctive message and mission, and that the ideals for which we stand and the goals for which we seek can never be realized in their highest form when worshiping and working (in the close and intimate combination in a single church) with others who do not share our views, possess our ideals, or seek our goals. It is further
>
> Resolved: That all officers and employees of the [state] Baptist Convention are requested to comply with the spirit of these resolutions.

Where such a policy was formally adopted, local churches could hope for no assistance from denominational officials in uniting with neighboring churches of other denominations.

RECOGNITION ONLY OF THE DENOMINATIONAL UNITED CHURCH

The policy most commonly adopted by denominational legislative assemblies was support of the denominational united church as the only acceptable form of union. This attitude as regards unchurched communities, for example, was for-

mally adopted by the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1924 as follows:

> . . . In the organization of a church in a community where there is no adequate support for several denominations, it is desirable to choose a church relation acceptable to the majority (as nearly as possible to all), and to hold to that denomination definitely and specifically—minister and people.[1]

Undenominational churches were opposed by almost all denominational leaders. The attitude of these men was not a mere result of denominational spirit. They had seen many weak undenominational churches turn for rescue to denominations, and they had watched others fall into inactivity. Many of them distrusted federated churches, too.

Among the denominations chiefly represented in local unions the right to serve as a denominational community church was conceded in most of the states; and such a church was protected from competition through three different means: comity agreements, the exchange of fields and allocation. Allocation, the assignment of new fields as yet without churches to specific denominations by mutual agreement, since it was usually arranged by interdenominational agencies such as state home-missions councils, will receive consideration in the following chapter, which will be devoted to the relationships of united churches to state interdenominational agencies. Comity agreements were also extensively arranged and enforced by interdenominational agencies; but they had also been established in certain cases through formal compacts between denominations as represented by legislative assemblies. Such compacts existed, for example, between the northern and the southern Presbyterians and the northern and the southern Methodists. Principles of comity thus adopted included provisions that neither of the contracting parties should plant a church in territory belonging to the other. In some states an informal understanding to the same effect existed between Congregational and Presbyterian overhead agencies.

[1] *Minutes*, 1924, p. 63.

Exchange of Fields

The policy of exchange of fields, which originated with the Maine Interdenominational Commission, provided that exclusive right to a field and to local church property should be surrendered in one locality by denomination A to denomination B, the latter making a corresponding surrender to A in another community. This plan was favored by denominational superintendents in many sections. They considered it "fair," and said that it gave a basis for opening negotiations. When they were pressed for examples of successful exchange, however, they made replies of which the following, quoted from a letter by a denominational superintendent in the far West, is typical.

> The superintendents all favor exchange of fields, but it seems very hard to work out a program, because of the many elements which enter into the problem. If superintendents arrange an exchange, the controlling elements, represented by a bishop in some types of organization, and the people in others, frequently do not concur.

Methodist overhead authorities often found it difficult to find comparable fields for exchange within the same supervisory district; and this they desired because otherwise the church retained would be in the territory of one district superintendent, and the church resigned—with the consequent loss in credit and indirectly in salary—would be suffered by another. A merger of a Methodist church in a Congregational church, for example, was held up three years while the respective overhead authorities sought an opportunity of exchanging the Methodist property under conditions agreeable to all parties, for comparable Congregational property. Finally the local people bought the Methodist building from the conference, and the consolidation was effected without exchange.

Not only did overhead denominational authorities find it difficult, when attempting to agree upon exchanges, to reconcile their own respective interests, but after they had agreed upon an exchange, they found it very hard to get it accepted by local church leaders. The fact that the local leaders were

considering union implied independence both in thought and in action. The idea of being "swapped alive," as they often called it, was very obnoxious to them. It made them feel that the overhead authorities looked upon them as a tyrant regards his serfs. After a meeting of a county council of churches, at which an attempt was made to effectuate eight exchanges, the local representatives of the churches in question expressed themselves as disgusted with what seemed to them a dickering, selfish spirit. One of them wrote, "It was like a horse trade"; and his further expressions showed that he had received a new light upon the denominational supervisors.

A careful search for successful exchanges resulted in finding very few.[2] In one so-called exchange, it proved that the denomination surrendering one of the fields had held there neither a church organization nor any property, but had merely intended to develop work. While commending the principle of exchange, a certain superintendent acknowledged that in his state his denominational overhead had arranged only one exchange of fields with another denomination, and that even in that instance the arrangement had been accepted by the local people in but one of the two communities concerned.

In Vermont there had been a number of exchanges of property; but this property had as a rule belonged to dead or inactive churches. A considerable number of so-called exchanges in Vermont, moreover, concerned pairs of federated churches, one of which agreed to take all its ministers from one of the two denominations, the other to take all its ministers from the other denomination. Arrangements of this kind were regarded by the superintendents as transition stages, acceptable locally, toward denominational united churches in the future.

Even of this Vermont form of exchange, however, comparatively easy though it was for local people to accept, one of the superintendents advocating it wrote with caution as follows:

[2] Reports were received of exchanges in two states that were not visited; but these there was no means of verifying.

> It is too early yet to do much bragging about it. Some federations were tried before the people were ready for them. They cannot be effected simply by two superintendents meeting behind a roll top desk and "swapping churches." The members must be consulted and sentiment must cement the union, else the tie soon sunders.

Assistance in Forming Unions

Many denominational superintendents had been asked for help by local churches wishing to enter into unions. If the form of union desired was a denominational united church of their own denomination, the officials naturally rendered assistance unless such action involved a breach of comity with the other denomination or denominations involved. But since the places where agitation for union was most intense were in general those already having competing churches, union was frequently almost impossible except through the compromise between denominations afforded by federation, or through the abandonment, temporarily at least, of all denominational connections to join forces as undenominational churches. In many sections such unions were effectuated, if at all, without the help of denominational superintendents.

To local churches desiring to federate, however, superintendents of one or more denominations regularly in New England and sometimes in other states rendered assistance of various kinds either as individuals or in informal coöperation. In New England, indeed, most superintendents not only gave assistance, but frequently took the initiative in suggesting union. This they did either by informal agreement among the officials of the denominations involved, through a denominational committee on federation—as at one time by the Massachusetts Congregational Conference—or through an interdenominational organization. This chapter will be concerned only with the official actions of denominational superintendents, a considerable number of whom, realizing the straits of weak churches in competing fields, definitely urged them to federate with neighboring churches.

Another form of assistance rendered by these men in the

period of inception was the furnishing of model forms of articles. The forms were provided in part by interdenominational agencies in not fewer than four of the New England states and three states outside New England. These forms usually avoided features common with early federations but believed by the superintendents to be blunders which churches without guidance might easily repeat. They safeguarded the entity of denominational units and included provisions—for example, regarding ministers and benevolences—that fitted into denominational arrangements. They often provided also for denominational supervision at critical junctures. According to one form, the signatures of the district superintendents concerned were required for the ratification of the articles; according to another, in case of disagreement within the united church the matter was to be referred to the district superintendents, with or without assistance, for arbitration.

Organization and Administration

Two of the denominations most commonly represented in unions of churches, the Methodist Episcopal and the Presbyterian in the U.S.A., had at the same time strong overhead authority and standardized forms of local-church government. Therefore, when churches of these denominations combined with churches either of the other denomination, or of a denomination whose churches were self-governing, problems arose for denominational leaders.

How Presbyterian authorities regard the government of a federated church by a joint committee, the arrangement almost universal for united churches of this type, was well illustrated in the *Minutes of the General Assembly* for 1920.[3] Here the following charge was made against a federated church:

> . . . The session . . . has surrendered its powers of control over church worship, work and teaching. By the Form of Government, Chapter 9, Section 7, the session is given and charged with the duty to exercise exclusive authority over the

[3] P. 88.

worship of the congregation. The session violated this provision relating to its exclusive authority by surrendering it to the federated committee, a body over which it has no control.

The Permanent Judicial Committee, to which the case had been referred, held that the union "is not in fact a federation, nor a coöperation, but is a combination of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches." For this, among other reasons, the desire of a minority that the federation should be dissolved was granted by the General Assembly.

The federation in question was in a city; but the same attitude had been observed toward town and country federated churches including a Presbyterian unit. In one such instance a federation of Presbyterian and Methodist units was governed by a common council, and both Presbyterian session and Methodist advisory board had been allowed to lapse, and not an elder was left among the resident members. Overhead influence restored the denominational machinery of both units. These, however, did not function, except in receiving denominational members, the real government of the federated church being still transacted by the joint agency.

A policy in respect to united churches of their own denomination not uncommon among Methodist supervisory officials is illustrated in an extract from the annual report of a district superintendent:

A few members of the church, well intentioned, sincere, but unmethodistic in some of their ideas of church life and work, have for years modified and limited church activities and worship to fit their unmethodistic ideas . . . Reasonable doses of our discipline, kindly and firmly administered by the pastor, became unbearable. Their opposition to forms of church work suggested by our discipline became serious; their prayers became cudgels. Something had to be done. . . .

Those composing the faction were urged to remain members of the church and attend its services on the simple condition that they cease their opposition to those activities that are commanded by our discipline. They refused. They were asked by the superintendent to withdraw in the disciplinary way. They did. Ten members withdrew.[4]

[4] *Official Journal, Vermont Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church,* 1913, p. 51.

Despite the denominational spirit exhibited by denominational officials in such cases as these, there were in 1924 seventy-seven Presbyterian units and 178 Methodist units enlisted in surviving federations. Thirty-three of these federations included both Methodist and Presbyterian units. Many of the federations including either or both denominations were ascertained to be functioning smoothly under a joint executive committee.

Ministerial Supply

The denominations in general had none too many good ministers. To obtain and to hold an adequate force of competent men, they had spent large sums to provide their preachers training, supervision and fellowship; and some had established pension systems at great expense. The Methodist Episcopal Church, in particular, had a carefully adjusted system of charges and ministers, in accordance with which, theoretically, no church lacks a minister and no minister a church. Therefore they naturally found the formation of united churches particularly inconvenient for the following reasons:

Some consolidations meant the loss of a Methodist charge; federated churches often provided that their ministers should come alternately from the denominations concerned; and united churches of almost any kind were likely to end pastorates without regard to the time of conference, when Methodist ministers are changed.

The leaders of many united churches, moreover, especially of those having elements of denominations accustomed to choosing their own ministers, often objected to having their minister appointed for them. The difficulty was frequently got around by friendly consultation beforehand, resulting in the appointment of a man acceptable to the church. But this was not always the case. Insistence by the overhead sometimes resulted in revolt on the part of the local people. For example, a certain church that had asked Conference to send them a particular minister was refused the man of their choice and given another. This man they re-

fused to accept. The church became wholly undenominational and the minister of their choice transferred his standing to another denomination and accepted their call. Another union originally intended as a federation of Congregational and Methodist units, owing to Methodist insistence on the right of appointing a minister, became a consolidated Congregational church. Considering all these difficulties, it is not surprising that Methodist overhead authorities sometimes refused ministers to united churches except on their own terms; sometimes failed to send their best men; and in other cases, after assigning a good man to a united church, sent him elsewhere after a brief term of service.

On the other hand, because a Methodist Conference could always send a minister on request, certain undenominational churches and some federated churches with or without a Methodist Episcopal element, after having difficulty in obtaining good ministers, asked Methodist conferences to appoint ministers to serve them. At least some of these appeals were granted.

For several of the denominations concerned in unions the choice of minister was regularly treated as a private matter between minister and church, the denominational superintendents being willing to advise but claiming no right to dictate. Most of these denominations enacted no legislation on the subject. The Presbyterian General Assembly, however, took action on several matters connected with ministers. A summary of this legislation is given in the *Minutes of the General Assembly* for 1924.[5]

> The Assembly recognized the power of the Presbytery to carry forward the installation of a Presbyterian minister in a federated church and also its power to enroll the pastor of such a church where he belongs to another denomination, being enrolled by the Presbytery as a corresponding member. . . .
>
> The Assembly of 1921, cf. Minutes, I, 197, declined to take action empowering an evangelical minister, not a Presbyterian, to act as moderator of the Session in a federated church. . . .

[5] Part I, p. 62.

Supervision

Denominational superintendents gave to united churches of the denominational type the usual amount of denominational supervision, and perhaps more, on account of their unusual opportunities and problems. For undenominational churches they normally undertook no responsibility. Their attitude toward federated churches varied with the region, with the policy of their national and sectional bodies, and with the individual superintendent. The supervision of federated churches, moreover, involved peculiar difficulties. Therefore, it needs especial attention here.

Supervision of federated churches

One kind of difficulties resulted from the fact that two or more denominational superintendents were in charge of units of a single federated church. Some superintendents held back because they feared encroaching on the field of another. Sometimes superintendents lacked confidence in one another.

A second difficulty mentioned by denominational superintendents in many places resulted from the distrust felt toward them by local-church leaders. This lack of confidence sometimes resulted from reports of opposition by the officials toward other unions or projected unions, sometimes from opposition to their own union on the part of previous denominational superintendents, sometimes from a conviction—which might or might not have been justified—that the superintendent in question set the welfare of his denomination above that of their own community, so that he would use his influence to swing the federated church as a whole into the ranks of his own denomination. The constitution of one federated church even provided that the denominational superintendents of the three denominations represented should so far as practicable make them an equal number of visits a year.

Still another condition that for some denominations ren-

dered difficult the supervision of federated churches was the fact that the government of the federated church by a joint committee afforded no regular machinery through which a denominational superintendent could exert his authority. For example, if a federated church had a Methodist unit, the quarterly conference, presided over by the district superintendent, at which local-church issues had formerly been decided, was superseded at union by a joint executive committee. The first time the denominational superintendent was expected to visit a certain federated church, for instance, the minister tried to collect a Methodist advisory board to meet him, but the occasion was not fruitful, so that afterwards he had the superintendent meet the joint executive committee. In dealing with mixed groups, Methodist denominational superintendents naturally could not exert their former authority. The superintendents of other denominations felt restrictions of a similar sort, though not to the same degree.

A fourth difficulty of the denominational superintendents, perhaps the most serious of all, was that many of these men did not understand the problems of federated churches or know the solutions of these problems that older federations had reached through experience. Many denominational superintendents, therefore, had no belief in federation and found it uncongenial to supervise a federated church.

Where these four difficulties were most strongly felt, the official supervision of units of federated churches was rarely exercised, and when exercised was frequently used to replace federation by separation or by consolidation.

Nevertheless, many denominational superintendents showed a strong interest in federated churches and did much to foster them. Three denominational superintendents connected with churches considering union in a certain community bid them Godspeed, one of them saying, "If you people have enough Christianity to carry this through, I wish you success." Three superintendents in another state, at the request of the three churches of different denominations in a small village, took the official steps looking toward federation and selected the first minister for the federated church.

Several other denominational superintendents whose courses had been condemned by the people of united churches were shown later to have had reasons and to have taken steps that the local people had misunderstood.

Home-Mission Aid

POLICIES

In their use of home-mission aid in connection with united churches, denominational agencies and officials employed three contrasting policies:

Economy of home-mission funds, through refusing in some sections to aid federated churches, and almost invariably to aid undenominational churches.

The fostering, through home-missionary grants, of young united churches of the denominational type, and in some sections of federated churches.

Opposition to united churches of all types except the denominational through grants of aid to other churches in the same communities with united churches.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The generalizations presented below will be based on two kinds of evidence: first, statements as to denominational policy either drawn from denominational publications or obtained privately from individual officials; and, secondly, statistics as to sums actually distributed by home-missionary boards, derived in part from figures published in denominational reports and in part from denominational officials.

The statistical study of home-mission aid was limited to that granted by four denominations—Baptist, Northern Convention, Congregational, Methodist Episcopal and Presbyterian in the U.S.A.—to which belonged a large majority of the churches entering unions.

For the Congregational churches that later became parts of united churches, complete information was available as

to how many had received aid the year before union; because in the *Congregational Year-Book* a certain symbol is prefixed to all figures for the salaries paid ministers receiving home-mission grants. For all but a very few Congregational churches, moreover, the amount of the aid given was obtained either from the published reports of state missionary agencies, or from denominational officials, state or national.

Similar data for Baptist churches were obtained from the annuals of state conventions publishing such facts and, for the churches of a few states, from the officials of the corresponding conventions. Since the conventions not publishing figures for home-mission aid did not as a rule include many churches combined in unions, information was lacking for only thirteen Baptist churches.

The information available for Methodist churches was less nearly complete. Since most conferences formerly published detailed figures for home-mission aid, the fact and amount of aid before union were ascertained for most Methodist churches that became parts of early combinations. But as many conferences ceased to publish this information at dates ranging between 1912 and 1920, amounts received from agencies connected with conferences (as distinct from the Centenary) were ascertained for the year before union for only 133 of 275 churches. Information as to grants from the Centenary, however, beginning with 1920, were received from an official source.

For Presbyterian churches, information as to aid, also from an official source, covered sixty-five churches, or about half the total number.

SAVING OF HOME-MISSION AID

Number of Churches Aided

Of the Congregational, Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches that later became parts of united churches, it was ascertained for nearly three-fourths whether or not they received aid just before union. Of these three-fourths, numbering about 600 churches, 166 were granted aid just

before union. These aided churches included about one-seventh of the Congregational churches; at least one-fifth of the Methodist churches; a fifth of the Presbyterian churches; and more than one-fourth of the Baptist churches. Since it is probable that some of the churches for which information was not obtained also received aid, the true proportions for the last three denominations are almost certainly still higher.

Thirty-six additional churches that were either not aided during the year before union, or for which definite information for that year was lacking, had been aided within ten years before union. The inclusion of these churches in the number of churches aided would raise the minimum proportion of churches belonging to all four denominations that were aided to about one-fourth. Since 20 per cent. of the town and country churches in the Twenty-five Counties received aid, the churches that later united had received aid in a somewhat higher proportion of cases than was usual.

In twenty communities, each of two churches that later united had received aid; and in one of these communities three such churches had received aid. Here not merely was home-mission aid given to competitive churches, but in nineteen communities two denominations, and in one community three denominations, had competed in giving aid.

Saving in Money Distributed

The partial information secured shows that at least ninety-three churches aided the year before union were no longer aided in 1923-1924;[6] and that the total granted these churches in the year before each entered a united church was $14,582. Moreover, since increase in the cost of living had led the denominational boards to raise the average amounts by which they augmented salaries, if these churches had still been receiving aid, the total amount expended upon them might easily have been even higher.

For a considerable number of Presbyterian churches, the

[6] Unless a few Methodist churches not aided by Centenary received aid from agencies connected with conferences.

amounts granted just before union were ascertained and also the total amount applied to each church. Twelve churches, aid to which stopped at union, had been subsidized for an average of twenty-four years, eight having received aid for more than twenty years and one for forty-seven years. Since the total sum that had been expended on these churches was $58,749, these few cases of union had resulted in no small economy of home-mission funds. Though for the other denominations parallel figures could not be obtained, it was learned that among the churches of each denomination that had entered into unions, there had been a considerable number that had likewise received aid over long periods.

FOSTERING UNITED CHURCHES THROUGH GRANTS

To seventy-four of the united churches about which it was possible to secure information, denominational home-mission boards distributed during the year 1923-24 a total of $15,267.75. In addition, thirty-five churches not aided in that year had been aided at some previous time since union.

Furthermore, aid was given in 1923-24 to twenty-eight united churches none of the elements of which had received aid before union. Of these churches eleven, distributed in all regions, were of the denominational type of union. The other seventeen were units of fifteen federated churches, all but three of which were in the Northern Colonial area. The aid given them after union was presumably intended to foster them as units of federated churches. The total amount given them in 1923-24 was $2,832, the average grant per federation being $189.

Overhead authorities of a few denominations had in some sections adopted the policy of aiding united churches in their early years to enable them to get a good start. A few denominational superintendents in New England employed a promise of aid as an inducement to persuade struggling churches in competitive situations to federate or to consolidate. In a certain state where this policy was favored, the denomination that granted most aid to federated churches in that territory had given $916 to four of its churches in the

year before union, and gave three of the same churches a total of $1,150 after they had become units of federations.

Since denominational bodies, as represented both by their legislative assemblies and by their salaried officials, generally regarded the community church of the denominational type with more favor than other types of united churches, it was to be expected that churches of that kind would receive more home-missionary money. Yet of the churches that were known to have been aided in 1923-24, only twenty-one were denominational churches, while fifty-one units of forty-five federated churches were aided. Furthermore, while the amount given to the federated churches was $8,118, that applied to denominational united churches was only $6,350. Moreover, $2,795 of the last-mentioned sum was granted to churches that had already been aided to the amount of $2,088 just before union, so that not much more than half the total can be considered as given primarily to foster the denominational united church.

At least six federated churches received aid in 1923-24 from the agencies of two different denominations, which thus coöperated in giving these churches in their early days a better minister than they could otherwise have afforded. Congregational agencies were concerned in all these cases, coöperating in three instances with Methodists, in two with Baptists and in one with Presbyterians. Moreover, united churches in at least two college towns received money from two or more denominations for special work for students, and a third had been given hope of similar subsidies.

In addition, two undenominational churches were ascertained to have received aid, each from a different denominational board; and two other churches of this type had been promised aid for the ensuing year.

AID IN COMPETITIVE[7] SITUATIONS

It was generally recognized that the giving of aid in competitive situations was prevalent in many sections and that

[7] The word *competitive* will be applied in this chapter to town and country situations where there are present two or more churches of the immersionist or of the predominant type of denominations.

it existed in at least scattered communities in almost every part of the country.

Many denominational officials frankly advocated the policy of using home-mission money to support weak competitive churches, even where there had developed considerable popular sentiment for church union. This policy found typical expression in the following sentences from a denominational state annual:

> Competition often severe, sentiment for federation or unionizing movements, the need of better equipment coupled with the plea for economy—those and other influences are pressing with almost disintegrating effect upon many village churches. Some of our smaller groups in country and in village are yielding. Within recent years six have disbanded. More than a score of others are practically inactive. . . .
>
> These small groups are a part of us and entitled to the finest spirit of coöperation in their days of struggle. . . . As a denomination serving the Master in the present and planning for a great future we must seek to conserve, revive, continue and enlarge our working forces in the open country and the small towns.[8]

A similar attitude was expressed by a Congregational superintendent in 1910 as follows:

> Much has been said about over-churched Mission fields. No doubt there are such places, and they are the scandal of Christendom. But Congregationalists are not sinners above all others in this respect. In a large majority of cases, where this objection can be urged, we were the pioneers, but other churches crowded in, divided the field or perhaps are taking it entirely away from us. We have been quite too willing to abandon a field because adverse winds were blowing against us, while other denominations "fought to win the prize."[9]

In some cases home-mission aid was used very definitely as a means of opposing union. Three churches that had been units of federated churches for a time, and had then withdrawn, were granted aid afterwards. Again, several churches continuing their activities in competition with united churches to which they had lost a considerable proportion of members also received aid. In two cases the aid

[8] *Baptist Annual,* Kansas, 1924, p. 36.
[9] *Congregational Annual for Iowa,* 1910, p. 90.

was of the usual kind—that is, it was given to supplement salary. Another church was furnished $1,500 to assist it to erect a community house, half this sum coming from the national building society and half from a state agency. The money was supplied for the express purpose of enabling the church to compete with the united church, which was undenominational.

After studying the local conditions and the local people, more than one denominational superintendent opposed to competition and in charge of a territory where a weak church in a competitive situation had received aid for many years, expressed the opinion that the situation presented a serious problem. "They will not unite: like Job's comforters," said one, "they will curse us and die." Another expressed his perplexity in these words: "To punch the thing in the head is criminal; to keep giving aid is criminal, too." Many superintendents felt that suddenly to cut off customary aid, through closing the church doors, would mean that some of the church people would be entirely without religious influences, and that others would be attracted by emotional forms of religion, which they considered harmful.

On the other hand, not a few sectional organizations, such as conferences or state conventions, adopted the policy of refusing grants to competitive churches. Others refused aid except where some denomination not recognizing comity obligations had entered the field later than their own church. Still others refused it except where some special condition made them feel that an exception was justified, as, where a grant would make possible a resident minister in a community otherwise without any. One denominational superintendent reported that the policy of refusing aid to any church in a competitive situation had been followed by his denominational state organization for twenty years.

Some denominational leaders, indeed, believed in refusing aid to all competitive churches for the express purpose of furthering union. Such a policy was advocated in the following extract from the letter of a denominational superintendent:

> "It looks as if starvation was about the only way to bring about union. The absolute refusal of Home Missionary boards to give any money to the weaker churches in competitive work, and the refusal of Church Building boards to put any money into the erection of competitive buildings, when adequate housing for the religious needs is already available, seems to be the only way out of this perplexity.

Denominational Statistics

The task of denominational statisticians, always difficult, was complicated by the rise of united churches. The figures for united churches of the denominational type, including affiliated churches, to be sure, presented no difficulty except that some of them had besides the reported membership a roll of associate members not included in denominational totals. The ministers of these churches, being for the most part of the same denomination as their churches, were accustomed to the usages of the denomination; and this was frequently, though not always, true of clerks and treasurers.

Federated churches, on the contrary, occasioned many irregularities in statistics. To begin with, each of the 643 denominational units of the more than 300 federated churches was entered as a separate church in the statistical tables of the respective denominations—although it took two and sometimes three such units to make the entity that engaged the minister, conducted the services of the church and performed all other local activities. The number of the units, instead of the number of the united churches, was therefore included in the total numbers of churches for the denomination, and also in the grand total of churches in the United States published in the *Year Book of the Churches*.

The denominational records included also a considerable number of dormant church organizations that had been absorbed in undenominational churches, kept on the denominational list because they had surviving denominational members, sent small contributions to denominational boards, and still held title to denominational property.

Again, denominational statisticians encountered difficulties connected with financial figures. Those of the different denominations severally represented in federated churches

expected of the federated church treasurers returns of their local-church expenditures. But a large majority of federated churches had for all local purposes a joint canvass and a common purse. How could the treasurer divide the totals among the denominational units? His difficulties were increased by the fact that the financial year of no two of the four denominations chiefly represented in federated churches ended in the same month, and that for two of the four, the date varied according to section. Some treasurers frankly admitted that in their uncertainty they had returned totals for the united church to both or to all the denominations represented, explaining the situation. A comparison of denominational figures with parallel figures obtained through surveys showed that a similar duplication was not uncommon. Moreover, a few churches that had openly severed all other denominational ties continued to report to the statisticians of a denomination, which was sometimes that of the minister. This practice affected not only financial figures, but also figures for membership.

Almost all federated churches had a combined Sunday school. Figures for Sunday-school enrollment were called for by the statistician of each denomination concerned. The enrollment may sometimes have been divided proportionately between the denominations; but as a general thing the total enrollment seemed to have been reported to both. As the Sunday schools of united churches were comparatively large, the errors in grand totals were so much the more significant.

On the other hand, there were more than a dozen federated churches for which denominational statistics furnished almost no figures. At one state denominational office it was said that the federated churches of that state were irregular about reporting their figures.

Benevolences

One of the charges made most confidently by denominational officials against federated and undenominational churches was that they were weak in benevolences. Against

churches of the denominational type of union they did not make the same accusation. The statistics gathered in the course of the present study, as has been shown in earlier chapters, indicated that united churches of all types were in truth comparatively weak in benevolences; but that federated churches were stronger than undenominational churches and stronger even than denominational united churches. Moreover, the contributions of federated churches in 1923-24 were considerably higher than those of the churches combining to form them had been during the year before union. The annual gain in dollars to benevolent agencies through the formation of 167 federated churches for which comparative figures were collected was $43,055.

A questionnaire sent by the Massachusetts Federation of Churches to ministers of federated churches in that state drew from a majority the opinion that benevolences had fallen off. For the twenty-nine town and country federated churches of the state for which statistics were published in denominational annuals, the figures for benevolences for the year before union and for 1923-24 after union, were tabulated with the following results:

The benevolences of twenty-six of the twenty-nine federations had increased, as had those of forty-five of the sixty-five denominational units. The total benevolences had more than doubled, rising from $5,988 to $13,226; the rate of gain being 120.9 per cent. The gain to benevolent agencies after federation in town and country areas of Massachusetts alone was therefore $7,238.[10] This gain was shared by the agencies of five denominations.

Conclusion

The relationships between denominational agencies and united churches were imperfectly adjusted. The movement was of recent origin. Each superintendent wrestled with the problems of only a few united churches; he did not know that similar unions had already sprung up in many hundreds of places and were being considered in hundreds of others.

[10] For factors contributing to increase in benevolences, see page 52.

The denominational leaders most interested, however, expected that when the movement should be more generally understood, the denominations would show their historic adaptability by making provision to serve united churches in ways suited to their peculiar conditions and needs.

Chapter XVII

ADJUSTMENTS BY STATE INTERDENOMINATIONAL AGENCIES

Efforts to coördinate united churches and the existing religious order were made by religious leaders, not merely in their capacity as representatives of separate denominations, but also as members of state interdenominational agencies. The present chapter will treat of this kind of effort made through state interdenominational agencies, of which there were two kinds: federations of churches, and smaller agencies composed solely of denominational supervisory officials.

History

To understand the situation of interdenominational agencies with respect to united churches, it is necessary to know how these organizations arose.

The first interdenominational state organization, the Interdenominational Commission of Maine, grew out of a recognition of the straits of the churches in small country communities of Maine where prosperity and population had declined. Its first meeting was held in 1890, and it was formally organized in 1892. Among its objects as set forth in the constitution, the first two were "to promote coöperation in the organization and operation of churches in Maine" and "to prevent waste of resources and effort in small towns." This pioneer organization outlined principles of comity that were widely copied, and originated the plan of exchange of fields.[1]

In Vermont, where the situation closely resembled that in Maine, an agency similar in purpose, called the Vermont Interdenominational Comity Commission, was formed be-

[1] See p. 255.

fore 1900. What it accomplished was told in a leaflet called "Church Federation Facts," published in 1909. This leaflet showed how, by eleven different methods, unity had been brought about in over sixty communities of the state, making good the claim that at that time "the Green Mountain state" was "the leading state in the Union in the use of the practical methods of federation, coöperation, and comity in healing the waste from too often contending churches in small communities."

An agency of a different kind, the state federation of churches, came into existence about the beginning of the present century. The most notable early example was that of Massachusetts, organized in 1902. This federation, instead of being composed like the interdenominational commissions of official representatives of the denominations only, functioned through a council consisting of one minister and one lay delegate to represent every 10,000 church-members, these delegates being appointed by state denominational bodies (or by the corresponding bodies).

The Connecticut Federation of Churches, patterned after the federation in Massachusetts, was organized in 1908; and similar agencies, some called federations and others councils, arose one after another in Pennsylvania, California, Ohio, New York and New Jersey. Early in 1926 similar organizations were being started in Minnesota and in Kansas. Several of these had as one of their departments a comity commission, the function of which was to prevent or to lessen competition.

Meanwhile additional state associations of denominational superintendents had been formed. Agencies of this kind, called home-missions councils from the national organization that had fostered them, were established in Colorado, western Washington, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, South Dakota and North Dakota. Two others, in Indiana and Oregon, had a temporary existence, only to become dormant, as did, after some years of action, the Home Missions Council of Colorado. Another, following a former state federation that had become inactive, was started in Wisconsin in 1923. In Massachusetts and in northern California home-missions

councils acted as comity committees in connection with state federations.

Besides these state home-missions councils, similarly constituted organizations were independently formed in Vermont, New Hampshire, southern California and Nebraska. Early in 1926 another was in process of organization in Illinois. In Nevada the few denominations at work, feeling no need of an organization, carried on similar coöperation informally.

Over half of these agencies of both kinds were started after the formation in 1919 of the Interchurch World Movement, which bore witness to an increase in the desire for interdenominational coöperation and at the same time gave new impetus to the coöperative movement.

No state interdenominational agencies of either kind had been formed up to 1926 in Iowa, Michigan, Arizona or New Mexico, although an attempt to organize one had been made in Michigan.

The home-missions councils of the various states included only the denominational superintendents of the denominations represented in the territory, the state or corresponding bodies of which were willing to coöperate. In some states not more than five or six denominations were associated in such agencies; but in Montana there were eleven, and in western Washington there were twenty-six.

Several denominational agencies, including examples of both types, failed to survive, and others experienced periods of inactivity; for in some states their situation was rendered precarious by intense denominational spirit. Much depended upon the attitudes of the individual denominational superintendents, who were changed frequently; and sometimes a man ready to coöperate was followed by one unwilling to do so.

Comparison of the Two Types of Agencies

Each of the types of state interdenominational organizations was claimed to have its particular advantages and drawbacks when considered as an agency for coördinating united

churches with the existing organization of religious forces. The state federations, it was pointed out, were more broadly representative in two respects: a larger number of denominations usually coöperated through them; and not only were denominational officials included in them but elected representatives, both lay and ministerial, of the sectional denominational bodies. On the other hand, the action of a federation was restricted in some states by the conservatism of some of the coöperating bodies.

For the home-missions council it was claimed, first, that as the denominational superintendents received salary and traveling expenses from the denominations for work that naturally included meetings of such agencies, they were more likely to be able and willing to attend; secondly, that they had so much influence over the churches that they could actually effectuate measures agreed upon. Again, the denominational superintendents belonging to agencies of this kind were naturally of denominations disposed to engage in coöperation. On the other hand, the charge was made that through a home-missions council the denominational superintendents approached the problems of competition as interested agents each for his own denomination, so that they were likely to consider not so much the good of communities as the retaining or the increasing of denominational advantages.

Kinds of Adjustment

The rest of the chapter will be devoted to describing various ways in which the interdenominational agencies worked toward coördination between the united churches and the existing religious order.

INTERDENOMINATIONAL COÖPERATION

Through these organizations representatives of different denominations undertook as joint enterprises such tasks as religious ministries to neglected groups, social legislation, coöperative evangelism, and the guardianship of public

morals. In so doing they discussed the problems involved as common problems which all faced, not as rivals but as fellow workers. The unsolicited publicity afforded the activities of these agencies by newspapers and other periodicals tended to foster a similar attitude in the public in general. The interdenominational agencies themselves also issued publications, ranging from an occasional bulletin to a weekly paper, which were designed to promote the spirit of cooperation both among denominational leaders and in the public at large.

PRINCIPLES OF COMITY

Moreover, this change of public sentiment was fostered by the interdenominational agencies in more direct ways. Since to lessen competition between struggling churches was avowedly one of the chief reasons for their existence, they early prepared principles of comity intended to direct the policies of the denominational bodies. Fundamental among these principles was one against the entrance by any denomination into a field already occupied, without previous consultation with the representatives of the denomination or denominations already present. This principle the interdenominational agencies endeavored to put into practical operation. Sometimes they accomplished this by means of arbitration. Through activities of this kind over a period of twenty years there was induced in Massachusetts, it was stated in one of the bulletins of the Federation, "such a spirit of comity . . . that such cases [new cases of competition] are now rare." [2]

ALLOCATION

Home-missions councils, especially in home-mission areas containing much unchurched territory, attempted to attain the same end through the allocation of fields. A given field was often allocated to the denomination first on the ground. Territory largely unoccupied was assigned to the denomina-

[2] *Bulletin No. 4, Revised Jan., 1922.*

tion the location of whose existing work rendered it best qualified to render service effectually and economically. Allocation presupposed that allotted communities should have united churches of the denominational type, with either open or associate membership. Large sections of certain far Western states had been allocated. For example, allocation on a large scale has been practiced with considerable success by the Denominational Superintendents' Council of Southern California. The efforts of the council found a peculiarly favorable environment because the communities were new, so that the interdenominational agency could influence them before competing churches had become established; because the period of development came after sectarian spirit had begun to decline; and, finally, because there had been allocated to each of the denominations in the field so much more territory than it could possibly cultivate that there was no room for rivalry.

ATTEMPTS TO REMOVE COMPETITION

"To remove existing cases of duplication," reported the Massachusetts Federation of Churches,[3] "is a more difficult task." How this Federation endeavored to accomplish their task was explained in the same bulletin, as follows:

> Disclaiming any authority, the Federation has sought to "keep the facts before the churches, till the churches change the facts."[4]

SURVEYS

Competition was frequently brought to light and public opinion was excited against it through the survey of churches and communities on a county scale. Many such surveys were made under the Interchurch World Movement. Those thus begun in Ohio were completed by the State Council of Churches. The home-missions councils of seven western states, with the coöperation of officials of the national organization, conducted so-called team-surveys of their areas. On

[3] *Bulletin No. 11, Revised Jan., 1922.*
[4] Ibid.

these occasions several groups of denominational superintendents, having divided the state or other area among them, visited in automobiles every community within their respective districts. The findings were reported immediately afterwards at a joint conference of all the teams; and upon these findings were based exchanges of fields, allocations, and other adjustments.

AID IN THE FORMATION OF UNIONS

Many state interdenominational agencies promoted denominational united churches, opposing unions of any other type. In several far-western states, undenominational churches were aided by interdenominational agencies in choosing a denomination and in becoming allied with it, a committee of the state organization even going, in several instances, to the community to give assistance. Several home-missions councils, as was said in a preceding chapter, endeavored to confine the use of the title "community church" to united churches of the denominational type that were alone in their respective communities.

Few interdenominational agencies fostered unions of the other types. The agencies of Massachusetts, of Connecticut, and of Vermont, however, all took the initiative in the promotion of federated churches, and the same course was followed in a few other states. The Massachusetts Federation distributed a letter "to 64 churches in 101 communities where there seemed to be overlapping." [5] The report continues:

> In these places, five adjustments were reported within six months. Altogether four new union churches have been formed, four pairs of churches have united as a denominational church, and in thirty-five cases churches of different denominations, each maintaining legal identity and denominational connection, form "a federated church" as one congregation.

The Vermont Conference of Superintendents and Secretaries, moreover, repeatedly studied all the competitive situations in that state and made systematic efforts to bring

[5] Ibid.

competing local religious forces together. Of ninety-two fields, dealt with almost wholly within the ten years ending Jan. 1, 1925, in only nine was there complete failure to reduce competition.

In Ohio, local problems of competition were handled in connection with county councils of churches, which in the light of the county surveys suggested unions through exchange and through federation, and which also brought together in conference the local leaders of the churches and the denominational officials concerned.

Certain state agencies provided churches considering union with standard forms of articles of agreement. The Massachusetts Federation of Churches distributed a form of this kind very widely, numerous requests for it coming even from other states. The Vermont agency supplied several different forms suited to each of several forms of federation recommended. The influence toward federation was also exerted in New England through correspondence and through visitation.

COMPETITIVE HOME-MISSION AID

Through a few state interdenominational agencies, denominational representatives compared notes regarding home-mission aid, thus discovering where aid was granted to one of two or more competitive churches, where it was given to two or more churches in the same community, and what amount was provided in each case. Sometimes this was done by the representatives themselves sitting about a table. In one instance, the secretary of the interdenominational agency requested the data on home-mission aid from the superintendents and arranged a tabulation which he made available to all.

In only a few states did the officials approach home-mission aid in competitive situations as one problem common to them all. Indeed, it was reported in one state that to form an interdenominational agency at all would have been impossible except on the understanding that the home-mission aid issue would not be raised. By the resulting

agency the granting of aid in competitive situations was attacked indirectly in two ways. Through the allocation of unchurched fields, work was assigned that, if properly done, would exhaust in grants to missionaries in non-competitive areas the home-mission funds put at the service of each sectional body by its overhead agencies. And the identity of the aided churches was made public by designating these churches—except for a few denominations not supplying the information—in a directory of the churches of the state published by the state home-missions council. What the result of these measures would be, remained to be seen.

Certain interdenominational agencies sought to awaken public sentiment against new cases of competition through their publications. The *Ohio Christian News,* for example, stated when presenting "a few points that need wider acceptance among the church people" of the state, that ". . . No church ought to give recognition to new mission projects which create new conditions of overchurching." [6]

SUPERVISION OF UNITED CHURCHES

The secretaries or the field men of a few state federations, especially those of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Ohio, were endeavoring to give some measure of supervision, Massachusetts having begun in 1925 to employ a special worker for this duty. Where the interdenominational agency was composed entirely of denominational superintendents, the amount of aid afforded depended on the degree of sympathy felt by individual officials for united churches, or for the form of union represented by a given church. In Vermont a federated church received fully as much assistance as a church of a single denomination, and perhaps more. In the far West denominational united churches were receiving considerable help.

In consideration of the special needs of undenominational churches arising from their lack of overhead connection, the Massachusetts Federation for the twenty-three undenominational churches of that state, thirteen of which were in town

[6] *Ohio Christian News,* Sept. 26, 1924.

and country area, performed services of four different kinds: It held for them thirteen annual conferences. It published concerning them statistics parallel to those published by the major denominations concerning their local churches. It afforded them help in finding ministers. And, finally, it gave them advice on request.

In many states, however, the supervision of united churches by interdenominational agencies was lacking. United churches frequently showed a desire for help of this kind. Many undenominational churches, and a considerable number of federated churches as well, expressed the sense of needing advice and help, and the preference that these things should come not from a single denominational board—an arrangement which to them symbolized division—but either from the denominational superintendents in question acting jointly, or from some unified interdenominational agency. A similar desire was sometimes expressed by churches on the point of combining their forces. In a discussion sheet prepared locally for use at a mass meeting to consider the federation of the churches, there was suggested a conference between the supervisory officers of the denominations concerned. The constitution of another church contained the following provision for joint supervision:

> Representatives of the general organizations of the federating churches are requested to work out the details of a plan of supervision, in which each will coöperate in furthering the interests of the entire Community Church rather than merely of one of the federating churches.

Nevertheless the overhead officials did not provide such joint supervision.

Several undenominational churches in the far West showed a tendency to adopt as an overhead the state home-missions council. In Massachusetts an undenominational church provided in its constitution for arbitration by the secretary of the state federation of churches, as follows:

> In case any question shall arise under these articles which the pastor and the Official Board are unable to decide, they shall lay the question before the Field Secretary of the Massachusetts Federation of Churches for advice.

Some interdenominational leaders felt that the need of united churches for supervision could best be met by an interdenominational agency of a new kind. The Home Missions Council of Colorado, for example, proposed to the state bodies of the denominations represented a detailed plan for a "Church League of Colorado," the members of which should be appointed by the state bodies, and which should function as the overhead body both for undenominational churches and for any others applying for such a relationship. This proposal was not adopted.

A still more radical plan was suggested at a meeting of the Vermont Conference of Superintendents and Secretaries in December, 1924. It was presented at the end of a comprehensive report of what had been achieved in ten years in unifying churches in small communities, and of what remained to be done. The suggestion was made through the following questions:

> Is a complete union of these three denominations in Vermont desirable?
>
> It took twenty years of study and conference in Canada to bring about union between the Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians. Is it worth while in Vermont to begin such a series of discussions, whether the desirability of complete union is admitted or not?
>
> Is it not probable that the large union of the national bodies will be preceded, if it ever comes, by pioneer work on the part of the state? and does not the present fine friendship lay the ground unusually well for at least a study of its possibilities in Vermont?

The desire for an interdenominational supervisory body was expressed by Dr. Alfred W. Anthony, when Executive Secretary of the national Home Missions Council, at the end of a set of "Principles of Comity," as follows:

> A seventh principle must sometime be formulated. Churches which grow up within communities and are undenominational in character, must be related to some overhead interdenominational body which will furnish them the desired fellowship, overhead supervision, ministerial supply, educational and inspirational help, and missionary outlets—Home and Foreign—which denominations furnish.

Chapter XVIII

FINDINGS

In conclusion, the principal findings of the study will be here briefly summarized.

Since 1910, united churches of four different types have increased rapidly in number throughout the town and country area of the northern and western parts of the United States.

All over this field, moreover, many small communities having competitive churches were found to be considering union.

Most of the organized churches entering into unions represented Protestant denominations of two types, the immersionist type and another here denominated the numerically predominant type.

Within these types, the elements of formally organized united churches belonged in a large majority of cases to four major denominations, to the Northern Baptist among immersionist denominations, and among denominations numerically predominant, to the Congregational, to the Methodist Episcopal and to the Presbyterian in the U.S.A. Three other immersionist denominations, eight other denominations of the predominant type, three liturgical denominations, and one emotional denomination were also represented organically in one or in a few united churches.

These elements were usually found united in two different combinations: immersionist elements with elements of the predominant type, and predominant with predominant.

The rise of united churches frequently brought to light cleavages between conservative individuals and those less conservative, and between those favoring and those opposing emotional types of religious experience. These cleavages resulted in realignment for purposes of worship and of church work.

United churches enlisted as members individuals from more than fifty denominations, including, besides the predominant and the immersionist denominations, liturgical bodies, emotional groups, and even the Catholic, the Hebrew, and the Mormon faiths, the Church of Christ Scientist, and the Spiritualist. People of very different opinions worked and worshiped together harmoniously and effectively.

United churches of all types, when compared statistically with churches of the traditional kind, ranked higher in several particulars usually accepted as tests of efficiency. But with respect to benevolences, united churches were not so strong as strictly denominational churches.

Among the types of united churches, however, undenominational churches in town and country, lacking the supervision received by denominational churches, ranked comparatively low, when judged by the usual tests. The undenominational church, moreover, though the form of union most easily adopted by local people, showed in rarer instances the ability to survive as an efficient organization.

United churches were showing vigor and resource in solving through the method of trial and error their many peculiar problems with respect to organization, property, basis of membership, and the like; and most of them, through these common endeavors, were becoming more closely united.

Many communities having a fairly homogeneous population largely representing the numerically predominant and the immersionist denominations, had a united church and no church besides this; but, on the other hand, a considerable number of such communities had in addition to a united church one or more other churches representing the same type or types of denominations. Considerable groups of the population representing other types of denominations tended to have their own churches.

United churches made their appearance in a world where the religious forces were already organized in denominational bodies, many of which had developed highly standardized methods of procedure. Efforts to coördinate the united churches and the existing religious order were made both

by the denominations and by state interdenominational agencies.

Many denominational and interdenominational officials, local leaders of united churches, and national leaders of the community-church movement were convinced that united churches needed an overhead connection, and also that there was danger lest efforts to meet this need should result in starting a new denomination.

Some of these leaders were coming to believe that denominational bodies, especially those whose churches most commonly united in formal unions, should establish an interdenominational agency of state-wide or national scope, the function of which should be to perform for all united churches not closely connected with a single denomination the services commonly rendered to strictly denominational churches by their overhead agencies.

APPENDIX

TABLES

TABLE I—DISTRIBUTION OF UNITED CHURCHES BY REGIONS

Region	All types		Denominational United		Federated		Undenominational	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	977	100.0	528	100.0	312	100.0	137	100.0
Northern Colonial	277	28.4	87	16.5	151	48.4	39	28.5
Middle West	371	38.0	186	35.2	125	40.1	60	43.8
Mountain	149	15.2	125	23.7	12	3.8	12	8.7
Pacific	180	18.4	130	24.6	24	7.7	26	19.0

TABLE II—DISTRIBUTION OF UNITED CHURCHES BY SIZE OF COMMUNITY

Community	Population of Center	All Types		Denominational United		Federated		Undenominational	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total	Under 5,000	934*	100.0	515	100.0	295	100.0	124	100.0
Country	Under 250	317	33.9	202	39.2	75	25.4	40	32.3
Open Country	Under 50	*83*	*8.9*	*58*	*11.3*	*12*	*4.1*	*13*	*10.5*
Hamlet	50 to 250	*234*	*25.0*	*144*	*27.9*	*63*	*21.3*	*27*	*21.8*
Village	250 to 2,500	581	62.2	297	57.7	204	69.2	80	64.5
Small	250 to 1,000	*450*	*48.2*	*225*	*43.7*	*156*	*52.9*	*69*	*55.6*
Medium	1,000 to 1,750	*95*	*10.1*	*51*	*9.9*	*36*	*12.2*	*8*	*6.4*
Large	1,750 to 2,500	*36*	*3.9*	*21*	*4.1*	*12*	*4.1*	*3*	*2.5*
Town	2,500 to 5,000	36	3.9	16	3.1	16	5.4	4	3.2

* For 43 united churches in villages or smaller places, the exact size of the community was not known.

TABLE III—DISTRIBUTION OF TYPES OF UNITED CHURCHES BY DATES OF ORGANIZATION

Types of United Churches	Total	Before 1900	1900 to 1909	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23	'24 *	Date Not Known
Denominational united †..	106	3	11	1	1	2	2	4	2	3	7	6	8	12	12	13	10	9	—
Federated	331‡	3	6	3	2	8	12	18	7	9	21	33	43	38	42	37	28	10	11
Undenominational	137	6	7	x	1	4	3	2	3	2	5	6	8	14	18	7	12	13	26

* Figures for 1924 are incomplete.
† Consolidations only.
‡ Nineteen of these federated churches were changed into unions of other types.

TABLE IV—AVERAGE TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF UNITED CHURCHES AND OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

Region	United		Strictly Denominational *				
				In 179 Counties ‡		In 140	In 47 Small Villages §
	D †	F	U	Country	Village	Villages §	
No. of Churches	*383*	*189*	*68*	*3,329*	*1,788*	*639*	*145*
Total	105	172	115	72	108	157	146
Northern Colonial	112	133	‖	67	114	172	115
Middle West	120	225	‖	77	124	169	124
Mountain	96	224	‖	37	84	103	81
Pacific	81	152	‖	48	84		

* Because of their independent origins, the various data in this and in the following tables are not quite comparable in certain respects. In this table, for example, the churches for which the general average for total church-membership for the entire field was computed, included churches in the South. If these were eliminated, the average membership for the whole field would be 152 instead of 157. There are also two differences in respect to regions. Though the Northern Colonial churches in the 179 Counties and in the Twenty-five Counties included churches in New England, all those surveyed in the American Village Study were in the Middle Atlantic. And for the Village Study the Mountain and Pacific regions were treated as one.

† In this table and in the tables to follow, D = denominational united churches; F = federated churches; U = undenominational churches.

‡ Morse, *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas* (New York; Doran, 1924), p. 50.

§ Data from the American Village Study, a report of which will soon be published.

‖ Figures not printed because cases were too few.

TABLE V—PROPORTION OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP THAT IS RESIDENT AND THAT IS ACTIVE IN UNITED CHURCHES AND IN STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

Membership	United			Strictly Denominational			
				In 179 Counties *			In 140 Villages †
	D	F	U	All	Country	Village	
No. of Churches	*11*	*25*	*11*	*5,552*	*3,329*	*1,788*	*639*
Per cent. Resident	79.6	78.6	80.2	87.1	—	—	82.0
Per cent. Active	74.3	51.9	76.1	72.5 ‡	69.0	75.0	73.0

* Brunner, *The Town and Country Church in the United States* (New York; Doran, 1923), pp. 57 and 58.

† Data from the American Village Study.

‡ From unprinted data gathered in connection with the study of successful churches.

TABLE VI—TOTAL EXPENDITURES OF UNITED CHURCHES AND OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

Region	United D	United F	United U	Strictly Denominational: In 25 Counties*	Strictly Denominational: In 140 Villages†	Strictly Denominational: In 47 Small Villages†	Strictly Denominational: In Farming Villages‡
No. of Churches	*383*	*61*	*55*	*1,031*	*679*	*145*	*331*
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
PER CHURCH							
Total	2,813	2,867	2,565	1,311	2,290 §	2,415	1,470
Northern Colonial	2,970	2,463	‖		2,572	1,570	
Middle West	2,587	3,413	‖		2,572	2,016	
Mountain	2,357	‖	‖		1,937	1,839	
Pacific	3,411	‖	‖				
PER MEMBER ¶							
Total	26.90	17.26	21.00	15.51	15.03	16.53	11.74¶
Northern Colonial	26.57	22.46				13.66	
Middle West	21.49	15.08				16.30	
Mountain	24.55	‖				22.73	
Pacific	42.10	‖					

* Morse, *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*, p. 80; the figure $17.81 is on the basis of resident membership.

† Data from American Village Study.

‡ Fry, *Diagnosing the Rural Church* (New York; Doran, 1924), p. 154. These farming villages are all in the Middle West.

§ If the southern white and colored churches are eliminated, the average expenditure for the whole field is (for 500 churches) $2,562—a little less than 12 per cent. higher.

‖ Figures not printed because cases were too few.

¶ In this table and in others to follow, except where it is otherwise specified, per capitas are based on total membership. The figure for farming villages is based on resident membership.

TABLE VII—AVERAGE LOCAL EXPENDITURES OF UNITED CHURCHES AND OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

Region	United			Strictly Denominational			
	D	F	U	In 25 Counties*	In 140 Villages†	In 47 Small Villages†	Farming Villages‡
No. of Churches	*383*	*61*	*55*	*1,031*	*679*	*145*	*331*
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
PER CHURCH							
Total	2,396	2,224	2,300	913	1,561 §	1,665	1,015
Northern Colonial	2,419	1,835	‖		1,655	1,046	
Middle West	2,215	2,660	‖		1,827	1,539	
Mountain	2,088	‖	‖				
Pacific	2,910	‖	‖		1,423	1,405	
PER MEMBER							
Total	22.92	13.39	18.83	10.60	10.24	11.40	8.10 ¶
Northern Colonial	21.64	16.73	‖				
Middle West	18.40	11.75	‖				
Mountain	21.74	‖	‖				
Pacific	35.91	‖	‖				

* Calculated from data on pages 80 and 81 of *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.* The per capitas there given are for resident members.
† Data from American Village Study.
‡ *Diagnosing the Rural Church,* p. 154.
§ If the southern churches, white and colored, are eliminated, the average local expenditure is $1,750.
‖ Figures not printed because cases were too few.
¶ On basis of resident membership.

TABLE VIII—AVERAGE CASH SALARY OF UNITED CHURCHES AND OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

Region	United: Salary Paid by Church D	F	U	Strictly Denominational: Salary Paid by Church In 25 Counties*	In 140 Villages†	In 47 Small Villages†	In Farming Villages‡	Salary Received by Minister Serving One Church 179 Counties*	Serving Two or More Churches 179 Counties*	Resident 25 Counties*	Successful Churches§
No. of Churches....	*247*	*55*	*55*	*1,031*	*679*	*145*	*331*				
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
PER CHURCH											
Total	1,349	1,615	1,403	539	998‖	1,110	732	1,430	1,300	1,030	1,661
Northern Colonial ..	1,452	1,554	¶		990	1,652		1,285	1,300		
Middle West.....	1,334	1,807	¶		1,144	1,044		1,448	1,128		
Mountain	1,276	¶	¶		951	969		1,525	1,392		
Pacific	1,347	¶	¶					1,537	1,296		
PER MEMBER											
Total	12.06	10.23	13.05	6.17	7.26	7.60	5.84‡				
Northern Colonial ..	12.36	11.84	¶								
Middle West.....	9.67	7.95	¶								
Mountain	13.18	¶	¶								
Pacific	18.88	¶	¶								

* *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas,* the first figure being computed from data on p. 80. The per capita is based on resident membership.

† Data from the American Village Study.

‡ *Diagnosing the Rural Church,* p. 154. The per capita is on the basis of resident membership.

§ Unpublished data from study of successful churches.

‖ Without Southern churches the average amount paid the minister would be $1,060.

¶ Figures not printed because cases were too few.

TABLE IX—AVERAGE BENEVOLENCES OF UNITED CHURCHES AND OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

Region	United			Strictly Denominational			
	D	F	U	In 25 Counties*	In 140 Villages†	In 47 Small Villages†	In Farming Villages‡
No. of Churches	*383*	*243*	*55*	*1,031*	*679*	*145*	*331*
	$	$	$	$	$	$	$
PER CHURCH							
Total	417	581	265	399	729 §	749	466
Northern Colonial	551	514	‖		916	524	
Middle West	372	676	‖		745	477	
Mountain	270	575	‖		514	434	
Pacific	501	537	‖				
PER MEMBER							
Total	3.98	3.84	2.17	4.91	4.79	5.13	3.72 ¶
Northern Colonial	4.93	4.20	‖				
Middle West	3.09	3.58	‖				
Mountain	2.81	‖	‖				
Pacific	6.19	‖	‖				

* *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas.* The figure $5.64, p. 80, is based on resident membership.

† Data from American Village Study.

‡ *Diagnosing the Rural Church,* p. 154.

§ If the Southern churches were eliminated, the figure for the whole field would be $731.

‖ Figures not printed because cases were too few.

¶ On basis of resident membership.

TABLE X—PROPORTION OF TOTAL EXPENDITURE DEVOTED TO BENEVOLENCES BY UNITED CHURCHES AND BY STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

	United			Strictly Denominational			
Region	D	F	U	In 25 Counties*	In 140 Villages†	In 47 Small Villages†	Successful Ch'ch's‡
No. of Churches	*383*	*61*	*55*	*1,031*	*679*	*145*	*40*
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	14.8	22.4	10.3	30.4	31.8 §	31.0	26.0
Northern Colonial	18.6	25.5	‖	27.0	35.6	33.4	
Middle West	14.4	22.1	‖	31.1	29.0	23.6	
Mountain	11.4	‖	‖	24.4	26.5	23.6	
Pacific	14.7	‖	‖	32.3			

* *The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas*, p. 81.

† Data from the American Village Study, a report of which is soon to be published.

‡ *Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches*, p. 117.

§ If Southern churches are eliminated, the per cent. of benevolences is 28.5.

‖ Figures not printed because cases were too few.

TABLE XI—DISTRIBUTION OF UNITED CHURCHES AND OF STRICTLY DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES BY MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Service	All Types		United				Strictly Denominational				
			Denominational		Federated		Undenominational		In 179 Counties*	In 140 Villages†	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	%	No.	%
Total	977	100.0	528	100.0	312	100.0	137	100.0	100.0	648	100.0
With minister	839	85.8	463	87.7	278	89.1	98	71.5	88.1	555	85.7
Resident	585	59.9	311	58.9	227	72.8	47	34.3	35.5	478	73.8
Non-resident	184	18.8	121	22.9	36	11.5	27	19.7	52.6	77	11.9
Uncertain as to residence	70	7.1	31	5.9	15	4.8	24	17.5			
Without minister	69	7.1	46	8.7	12	3.8	11	8.0	11.9	54	8.3
Unknown	69	7.1	19	3.6	22	7.1	28	20.5		39	6.0

* *The Town and Country Church in the United States*, p. 73.
† Data from the American Village Study.

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